

Syria urges Turkey to share water fairly

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria's official press urged Turkey on Sunday to share water fairly, saying it had no right to monopolise the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The official daily Tishreen said the rivers had always crossed Syria and expressed surprise at remarks by Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel on water resources. "Syria calls for a fair sharing of the Euphrates and Tigris waters in order not to deny Syrians drinking water and water to irrigate their plants," it said in a front-page editorial. "Nobody has the right to divert them and subject the Syrians to a catastrophe," it added. "If every country started to divert rivers claiming they were on their lands the whole world would be subjected to grave dangers." Mr. Demirel, speaking on the eve of Saturday's opening of the giant Ataturk Dam, said Syria and Iraq had no claim to the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris. "The water resources are Turkey's. The oil resources are theirs. We do not say we share their oil resources. They cannot say they share our water resources," he said. Tishreen, which reflects government thinking, expressed "surprise and astonishment" saying his statement contradicted treaties between the two countries.

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Gunmen kill senior Kabul bureaucrat

KABUL (AP) — Gunmen on Sunday killed a senior official acting as a bridge between the former communist regime and the new Islamic government, authorities said. Abdul Ahmad Wulooi, 40, was gunned down outside his office at the Foreign Ministry downtown, authorities said. They said the gunmen escaped in a waiting taxi after firing about a half dozen shots. No one claimed responsibility and officials said they had no suspects. Mr. Wulooi headed the political department of the Afghan Foreign Ministry and was among scores of middle- and senior-level bureaucrats who kept their posts after guerrillas won a 14-year war with the former communist regime in late April.

Red Cross gives food to Somalis on ship off Kenya

MOMBASA, Kenya (R) — Red Cross workers delivered emergency food supplies Sunday to a shipload of Somali refugees who have been stranded off Kenya since Wednesday. A Red Cross boat delivered rice, fruit, water and medical supplies to the ship, which Kenyan authorities are refusing to allow to dock. A spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees said two Red Cross doctors had boarded the ship, which he named as the Samas-1, registered in St. Vincent. He said the ship was carrying 351 Somali refugees, 150 children, 118 women and 83 men. (see page 2)

Extremists throw Molotov cocktails at villagers in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Muslim extremists wounded six persons Sunday when they threw molotov cocktails at villagers attending a Muslim religious ceremony they consider unorthodox, police said. The attack occurred in a village in Damietta province, 180 kilometres north of Cairo. Police said five extremists threw molotov cocktails at villagers celebrating the birthday of a prominent Muslim cleric in their hamlet. Six people were burned in the attack. Extremists consider unorthodox the veneration of clerics, a popular practice in Egypt. The police source said the five assailants were arrested and taken in for interrogation.

Soviet-French space launch set for Baikonur site

MOSCOW (R) — A Frenchman and two Russian cosmonauts blast off Monday for a mission that may help prolong the lifespan of the Mir orbital space station. A soviet spacecraft is scheduled to take off from the sun-baked Kazakhstan steppe at 1008 Moscow time (0608GMT) and rendezvous with the space station that has been the workhorse of the Soviet space programme since 1986. Space officials had feared the station might have to be abandoned as equipment ages and its orbit brings it closer to Earth's atmosphere. But a recent agreement by leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States to release funds for Mir could ensure its future. Space officials say Russian cosmonauts Anatoly Solovoyov and Sergei Avdeyev, due to stay in orbit until January, will install new equipment that will help keep the ship aloft. Frenchman Michel Tognini will return next month after completing experiments.

Shi'ite cleric recovering from heart surgery

BAGHDAD (R) — Shi'ite Islam's top scholar is in good condition after heart surgery, his doctors said on Sunday. Grand Ayatollah Abol Qassem Al Khoei, 92, was admitted to Baghdad's Ben Ali Nafis hospital on Wednesday after complaining of heart trouble. "We have a team of medical specialists looking after him," Dr. Rasmi Al Rukabi, the hospital director, told Reuters. "The doctors decided to operate on Thursday morning. His heart, his pulse are working normally," Dr. Rukabi said. "They implanted a heart demand pacemaker, but his eminence is still suffering from other ailments."

U.N. and Iraq resolve dispute

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United Nations and Iraq resolved a dispute over inspections of Iraqi facilities, heading off what had been looming as a possibility of renewed hostilities, U.N. and Iraqi officials said.

"This means the special commission will conduct a full inspection of the building of the Ministry of Agriculture, as previously designated for inspection," said Rolf Ekeus, head of the Security Council's weapons commission. U.N. officials suspect the ministry building houses documents about Iraqi weapons.

Mr. Ekeus said the inspection would take place Tuesday and that he would be part of the team. It will include experts from Germany, Finland, Switzerland, Sweden and Russia. U.S. and Iraqi officials had become increasingly belligerent in recent days over the right to inspect Iraqi facilities, with American officials saying they were considering use of force to compel Iraqi compliance.

The dispute began earlier this month when a U.N. weapons inspection team was barred from the Ministry of Agriculture in Baghdad. The inspectors maintained a vigil at the ministry for 17 days but retreated on Wednesday because of increasingly violent protests.

Iraq denies having weapons-related materials inside the ministry and has portrayed the U.N. insistence on inspecting the building as interference in its internal affairs.

The ceasefire terms ending the Gulf war allow dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and

inspection of facilities suspected of housing information about such armaments.

Earlier Sunday, Iraqi ambassador Abdul Amir Al Anbari emerged from a meeting with Mr. Ekeus and said the impasse had been resolved.

"We finalised every detail to the mutual satisfaction of both the commission and the Iraqi government," Mr. Anbari said. "It ensures respect for Iraqi sovereignty."

But Iraqi President Saddam Hussein implied the "mother of all battles" he promised during the Gulf war is not over.

"The masses expressed their full and unlimited readiness to defend the homeland and foil all conspiracies aimed at undermining Iraq's security and sovereignty," he was quoted by the Iraqi News Agency as saying.

President Saddam on Sunday decorated several of his top aides with medals of courage, including deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, INA reported.

"May you be cherished by God, and may he keep the flag of the principles you fought for in the mother of all battles always hoisted," he was quoted as saying at the ceremony.

"That flag is still hoisted, and it shall continue to be hoisted for as long as the mother of the battles continues," President Saddam said.

"It continues, because the enemy wants it to, and when the enemy wants to go on, we have to mobilise the ranks of the faithful so that our flag remains hoisted."

President Saddam also accused Iraqi shopkeepers of profiteering

by charging high prices for basic goods, an indication that renewed war fears are gripping his country.

"They have started to fleece the people," he said.

Baghdad Radio reported a "huge demonstration" outside the Ministry of Agriculture on Sunday to denounce "the cowardly, criminal acts of the U.N. inspection team."

Before Sunday's announcement at the United Nations, U.S. officials were hinting at a possible military solution to the crisis. There was no immediate response out of Washington about the U.N.-Iraq agreement.

In Manila, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said Sunday that Iraq must do more than open its Ministry of Agriculture to U.N. inspectors.

"Suffice it to say there should be full compliance and implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions," Mr. Baker said before flying back to Washington. "We don't have that right now."

Mr. Baker will meet Monday with Mr. Bush to discuss pressure on Iraq. Other U.S. officials on Sunday emphasised that military action was an option.

"If he fails to comply, we have the option... to once again use military force if that's required," U.S. Secretary of State Dick Cheney said in an interview with CBS Television. He emphasised that the goal is "compliance with the U.N. resolutions."

Mr. Cheney added that the U.S. government would not seek

(Continued on page 5)

Syria agrees, but Israel undecided on Aug. 10 talks

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria said on Sunday it would attend a new round of Middle East peace talks in Washington next month and other Arab countries were also expected to give their approval.

"We welcome the resumption of the bilateral talks as soon as possible. We will respond positively when we receive the invitation," Syrian Foreign Minister Feroq Al Sharaa told reporters.

Arab sources in Damascus said other Arab countries bordering Israel and a Palestinian delegation from the occupied territories would also attend the talks.

But Israel has not made a final decision to attend the fresh round of talks in Washington next month, senior officials said on Sunday.

"There are discussions but there is not yet an agreement whether they will be in Washington," cabinet secretary Elyakim Rubinstein said after the weekly session on Sunday.

A senior official close to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Israel had not yet decided to attend because it had not received a formal invitation to the talks in Washington.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said on Saturday the United States would like to see Arab-Israeli peace negotiations resume in Washington Aug. 10. The Israeli official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Aug. 10 would be an unacceptable date because it would coincide with a scheduled meeting

(Continued on page 5)

Abu Jaber urges joint Arab stand

DAMASCUS (Petra) — Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber has called on Arab countries to unify their stands and adopt an effective and influential say in the search for a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine question.

In an interview with the Syrian newspaper Tishreen, Dr. Abu Jaber said the international community "should avoid double standards in dealing with regional issues."

Noting that there were bitter realities which dominate the international community and international relations, he said: "It is not acceptable for any state, be it big or small, to retain the right to violate international legitimacy and give deaf ear to its resolutions, as is the case with the Arab-Israeli conflict."

He described this week's Damascus meeting of the Arab side to peace talks with Israel as constructive and fruitful, saying that they enhanced the "spirit of brotherhood and understanding" among the countries involved in the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Rabin has said he wants to see Arab-Israeli peace negotiations resume in Washington Aug. 10. The Israeli official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Aug. 10 would be an unacceptable date because it would coincide with a scheduled meeting

(Continued on page 5)

Compromise on 'diaspora' Palestinians discussed

The Jerusalem Post

ISRAELI WILL allow a Palestinian representative from abroad to participate in select multilateral peace negotiations, if the Arabs agree to strike the Palestinian "right of return" from the agenda of a working group on refugees, a senior Foreign Ministry source said yesterday.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres met with aides of Secretary of State James Baker this week, in a bid to find a formula along these lines that would be acceptable to all sides, the source said. Baker was seeking to win Arab acceptance of such a formula during his

trip to Middle East capitals this week.

The source said the idea has been approved by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, though officials in the prime minister's office refuse to comment. In the spring, the Likud government boycotted the refugee session as well as one on economic development, due to the inclusion of Palestinians from abroad.

Both this senior source and senior Canadian officials, whose country is hosting the panel on refugees, believe Israel's agreement to full participation in the multilateral will be wrapped up during next month's U.S. summit

between Rabin and President George Bush.

The optimism of the Foreign Ministry source comes soon after Peres discussed the issue on Israel Television's Moked programme last Wednesday. In the TV interview, Peres said, "the principle that we must honour is that we will not discuss the 'right of return.' But on technical issues, I hope will find a way to bridge (the gap). But the principle we will not concede."

Israel wants the West and Arab states to address the plight of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, but only as



Iraqis demonstrate outside the Ministry of Agriculture in Baghdad

Donors to meet on aid for Jordan in September

By P.V. Vivekanand

Jordan Times Staff Reporter AMMAN — The World Bank has reaffirmed its commitment to generate international financial assistance to Jordan, and one of the main channels to secure aid for the Kingdom is a meeting of major donors towards the end of this year, informed sources said Sunday.

The World Bank approach to Jordan is based on the finding of the international body that the Kingdom's economy is "performing surprisingly well, given the extremely difficult situation it faces, particularly the return of 300,000 expatriates from the Gulf states," said one of the sources.

The source said a World Bank delegation which visited Jordan last week "expressed this conviction and reaffirmed the bank's commitment to securing international funds for Jordan to help its balance of payments."

The World Bank delegation was here on a "business visit"

during which it focused on "sectoral adjustments" in Jordan aimed at "economic growth and development," added the source, who preferred anonymity.

"They (the World Bank) will come back to Jordan in October to finalise the practical forms of the adjustments," which will include a revamping of the government's policies towards the agriculture sector and power and water tariffs.

The delegation was headed by World Bank Vice-President Caio K. Koch-Weisser, chief of country operations Spiros Tsvoyadzis and economic experts Abdullah Abu Habbab and Sufdir Chitale. His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and the various ministers directly concerned with the ongoing discussions with the World Bank held talks with the delegation.

Jordan hopes that the donors' meeting, tentatively scheduled to be held in Paris in

November, is expected to advance its quest to take care of its external obligations during the year 1993, economist Faded Faneek and officials said.

According to Dr. Faneek, Jordan faces a shortfall of up to \$800 million in its financing needs for 1993, and the Paris meeting could come up with up to \$500 million in pledges. The remainder would have to be made up from the treasury, a prospect Dr. Faneek thinks would not have a major adverse impact on the national reserves or the dinar.

"As long as the appropriation from the treasury during the year is less than \$300 million, I don't think it will have any negative impact on the monetary status of Jordan, particularly the dinar," Dr. Faneek told the Jordan Times.

Among the major countries taking part in the Paris meeting, which will coincide with a similar meeting on Egypt, will be Japan, Germany and other members of the European Community (EC), the United

Corruption case goes before full House today

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament today hears a report from its Investigations Committee recommending that a former prime minister and two former ministers be tried by a special court for corruption in a multi-million dollar highway project.

The recommendation by the committee must be approved by 54 of the 80-member House before the three could be tried by a higher court presided over by the speaker of the Upper House.

The Lower House Sunday approved a draft law on the Jordanian Arabic Academy after introducing several amendments to it upon recommendations by the House's Law Committee.

Palestinians stage Jerusalem protest with Israeli permit

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — About 300 Palestinian merchants staged a demonstration against high taxes Sunday that had a rare ending for protests during the 4½-year Palestinian uprising: There was no violent confrontation with police.

About two dozen police in riot gear stood by quietly as the merchants held a sit-in for two hours. The businessmen, many of them middle-aged, had succeeded in getting a police permit to demonstrate.

During the uprising, most protests in Arab East Jerusalem have erupted into violence between stone-throwing Arab youths and police firing teargas and sometimes rubber bullets.

Police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby first told the Associated Press the demonstration permit given the merchants was the first granted Palestinians during the uprising. He later said there were a few others, though he could not remember when.

The Palestinian merchants complain Israeli authorities are trying to charge unrealistically high taxes. Some waved placards saying "No taxes without service" and "Stop raiding our homes and shops."

The latter referred to raids to confiscate videos, television sets and shop equipment conducted after the city sent out back-taxes notices in May.

Ziad Hamouri, the merchants' spokesman, argued the occupied authorities were demanding higher taxes than most businesses could afford since sales had dropped sharply during the uprising. Others complained they got few services for their taxes.

Amir Cheskin, an Israeli adviser on Arab affairs, told reporters the municipality would consider individual appeals.

Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinians at Mideast peace talks, complained the occupation authorities were illegally imposing Israeli taxes since Israel's "annexation" of East Jerusalem was not internationally recognised.

Israel moves to lift benefits to settlers

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's cabinet will rescind the benefits Israel's previous hardline government gave Jews to settle in the occupied territories, cabinet ministers said on Sunday.

The cabinet, in a new blow to Jewish settlement, set up a committee to re-examine the benefits which include discounts on taxes, mortgages, roads, power and water.

Mr. Rabin's government, which took office this month vowing to accelerate Middle East peace moves, has already reversed plans by Yitzhak Shamir's former hardline coalition to build nearly 7,000 new housing units in the occupied territories.

Referring to the "green line" separating Israel from the lands it occupied in the 1967 war, Immigration Minister Yair Tsaaban said:

"In the future there will be fewer benefits, which will enable minimising the number of people moving from this side of the green line to the other."

Communications Minister Moshe Shalal said Israel would attend the next round of Middle East peace talks expected in Washington next month.

Asked if Israel had agreed to attend the talks in the U.S. capital, Mr. Shalal told Israel Radio: "We certainly intend to answer the invitation and stick to the schedule."

Mr. Rabin, who hopes to win \$10 billion in U.S. loan guarantees denied Mr. Shamir because of the settlements, promises to use funds freed by settlement curbs to create jobs for Israel's 11.6 per cent unemployed.

"Areas in (the occupied West Bank) that are close to the centre of the country will not get the same benefits and the same preference they got in the Shamir government," Health Minister Haim Ramon told reporters.

Finance Minister Abraham Shohat, who received death threats after he and Housing Minister Binjamin Ben Eliezer announced the settlement curbs, said the warnings did not scare him.

"I got a couple of telephone calls, but I don't look scared, do I?" he told reporters.

Shin Bet secret police placed Mr. Shohat and Mr. Ben Eliezer under 24-hour armed guard after they received the threats.

Peres optimistic on deal

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has said he is optimistic that Mr. Rabe and U.S. President George Bush can wrap up a controversial loan-guarantee agreement when they meet in Maine next month.

"We feel the air is very favourable and we are rather optimistic about it," he said on NBC-TV's "Today" show.

"We see an entirely new situation," he said after this week's talks with Secretary of State James Baker.

Mr. Bush has invited Mr. Rabin to visit him at his Kennebunkport estate on the Maine coast.

Mr. Peres said that the new Israeli government would press ahead to strike a deal with the Arabs.

"We would like to have a real and serious peace with our neighbours, whether it is the Palestinian people or the Arab countries neighbouring us," he said.

Asked how long it would take for Israel to grant the Palestinians some autonomy or limited self-rule, Mr. Peres said "we hope it may happen in a matter of nine months or 12 months."

Israel must gird for Iraqi Scuds, ex-general says

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel, hit by 39 Iraqi Scud missiles in the Gulf war, must be ready for new salvos if Washington again attacks Iraq, a former army chief said on Sunday.

Retired General Mordechai Gur, designated to be deputy defence minister in Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's new government, told Israel Radio:

"I have no doubt that given the news of the last 24 hours, Israel has no choice but to examine the situation very, very seriously."

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker warned on Sunday of military action after Iraq sealed off the agriculture ministry in Baghdad where U.N. inspectors suspect Iraq is hiding information on its weapons.

"If both the heads of the CIA and the political level in the United States speak of a possibility the Iraqis will launch Scud missiles at Israel and at Saudi Arabia, certainly Israel must take this risk seriously in every sense."

Gen. Gur said. rain.

NEWS IN BRIEF

for cooking during the Gulf war, were now trying to store enough oil and gas at home. Allied bombing in the 1991 Gulf war which forced Iraq out of Kuwait reduced Iraq's refining capacity to almost three per cent of pre-war levels, but Baghdad says it is now 85 per cent restored. Mr. Hmoud said Iraq's refineries were operating at full capacity, but he did not elaborate.

Bomb explodes in Istanbul

ANKARA (R) — A bomb which exploded at a car factory in Istanbul caused slight damage on Sunday morning but no injuries, officials said. Police said the bomb had been planted in a car at the Ozen Otoyolu Sanayi AS factory. Another bomb, planted in

another car in the car park, was defused, police said. There were no immediate claims of responsibility, but police suspected Turkey's deadliest urban guerrilla group, Dev-Sol (Revolutionary Left) was behind the attack.

Iranian team in Kabul for economic talks

to arrive from Iran since the present Islamic rulers took power in Kabul last April after 14 years of civil war. Talks between the two sides will cover bilateral relations and economic and trade matters, Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Jalil Shorougi said. "We aim to

Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Jauh Shams said, "Iran is our neighbour and quite a large number of our refugees are in that country," he said. "They (Iranians) have stood on our side in international forums and have helped us." The delegation is also expected to meet Afghan President Burhamuddin Rabbani and Prime Minister Abdul Saboor Fareed. Some Afghan factions accuse Iran of meddling in their internal affairs by backing Shiite

Muslim groups such as Hezbe-Wahdat, which was involved in recent fighting between rival factions. Afghanistan is welcoming offers of aid and trade from neighbouring countries but is trying to ensure that their influence in the country is limited.

Mujahedeen report demonstrations in Iran

Iran. The Baghdad-based group said thousands of teachers and students in the city of Javanrood launched the demonstration Thursday as a government official attempted to make a speech on the fourth anniversary of a large battle between Iran and the

Mujahedeen's National Liberation Army (NLA). Many demonstrators and revolutionary guards were injured in subsequent clashes and scores of people were arrested, the Mujahedeen said. There was no mention of the incident in Iranian media and the

report could not be independently confirmed. The NLA penetrated into western Iran in July 1988 in the closing weeks of the Iran-Iraq war.

Pathiser' shot Boudiaf

fluence of Islamic movements from inside and outside Algeria. "He espoused the demands of Islamic movements seeking to in-

...knew him for his pro-fundamentalist ideas."

Boumaraf, the spokesman said, decided to carry out the assassination after the cancellation of Algeria's first multi-party

The country's army-backed leaders scrapped the poll after the now-banned fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) forces in different towns and more than 300 arrested. They were protesting against the jailing this month of FIS

Mr. Boudiaf took over as head of state six days later.

09:30	Dubai (EM)	21:30	Cairo (MS)
11:15	Wharfedale (MS)		

13:25	Muscat, Abu Dhabi, Doha	(SU)
16:30	Istanbul	(TK)
19:20	Rome, Beirut	(AZ)
20:00	Paris, Damascus	(AF)
20:30	Cairo	(MS)

DEPARTURES	Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	Apple (red) 580/300
(Terminal 1)	Apricot 460/330
	Banana 500/450
	Besana (Mukhammar) 330/300

07:15	Beijing (RJ)	Beijing	560 / 300
07:20	Damascus (RJ)	Cabbage	90 / 40
12:15	Montreal, Toronto (RJ)	Carrot	240 / 200
13:15	London (RJ)	Cauliflower	240 / 180
13:25	Frankfurt (RJ)	Cucumbers (large)	80 / 40
13:45	Cairo (RJ)	Cucumbers (small)	40 / 20

14:45	Moscow (RJ)	Cucumbers (atom)	140 / 90
21:40	Dhakaran (RJ)	Eggplant	130 / 30
21:30	Abu Dhabi (RJ)	Garlic	550 / 450
21:45	Bahrain, Doha (RJ)	Lemon	700 / 600
22:30	Dubai, Muscat (RJ)	Marrow (large)	130 / 70
		Marrow (small)	260 / 200

Onion (dry)	130 / 80
Onion (green)	150 / 100
Oranges	440 / 360
Peaches	540 / 400
Pears	420 / 360

09:59	Aden (AL)	Plums	350 / 280
09:15	Beirut (ME)	Pepper (hot)	200 / 150
10:30	Dubai (EM)	Pepper (sweet)	140 / 90
12:59	Khartoum (SU)	Potato	180 / 120
14:30		Sweet Melon	210 / 160

17:30	Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Amsterdam (SF)	00/30
	Istanbul (TK)	50/20

Paper analyses maternal mortality, urges better health care, education

By Cosima Hadidi
Special to the Jordan Times

Too many Jordanian women still die during or after giving birth of causes that can be prevented through proper health care and sufficient health education.

Participants in a two-day workshop on safe motherhood and birth spacing, conducted by the National Population Commission (NPC) in conjunction with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Health, dealt in-depth with this issue and came up with several recommendations to lessen the incidence of maternal mortality and thus improve Jordanian quality of life.

"Maternal mortality is a measure of health development since there is a large discrepancy between the maternal mortality rates of developed and developing countries, which sometimes have 200 times the mortality rate of developed countries," said Dr. Makram Isahq, director of the gynecological department at Al Basheer Hospital and member of the NPC. He added that maternal mortality is a big problem because it kills women in their most productive years, often mothers who already have several little children.

Pregnancies that are less than 24 months apart do not allow the woman's body to recover properly and regain its level of iron and calcium.

"Safe motherhood starts in the woman's childhood-malnutrition, low weight, stunted growth and anaemia often coupled with early pregnancies before the woman's body is fully developed, all increase the risk of death through childbirth," he said. In addition, too many pregnancies too close together put the mother's life at

risk as well as harming the children, he said.

The workshop was based on a paper by Dr. Isahq and Mr. Abdulrahman Ma'atiah, which gave an in-depth analysis of the causes of maternal mortality in Jordan, the services offered to pregnant women, and birth spacing services.

The first section of the paper dealt with maternal health care and stated figures pertaining to maternal health, while noting that these figures are only approximate for lack of proper registration and research. There is no national registry of maternal mortality but workshop participants discussed a form created by the NPC to create a unified registration system to be implemented on a national level. A similar form was proposed for the detection of high-risk pregnancies which need additional attention.

One problem that was noted in the workshop was a lack of proper health care and health education, especially in remote areas where maternal mortality rates are the highest. Dr. Isahq said that the focus should be on improving the quality of care, not the quantity of health care centres.

"The solution does not lie in importing technology, but in using our resources and possibilities in a more effective way," he said. He added that a crucial factor was constant supervision of pregnant women's health and educating them on healthy practices.

The second part of the paper dealt with birth spacing and contraceptives. It was noted that in general the use of contraceptives is on the rise and that contraceptive pills are the most popular method of birth spacing.

While 99 per cent of surveyed women were familiar with con-

traceptive methods, only 35 per cent used them. It was found that the staff in health care clinics need to be trained on administering contraceptives. It was suggested that more female doctors should be employed to better relate to women the importance of birth spacing and to administer diaphragms, which women are reluctant to have male doctors administer.

The final part of the paper contained recommendations pertaining to the organised collection of information on maternal mortality, the improvement of maternal health care, and the support of the national birth spacing programme. It was recommended that a specific committee be formed of members of the NPC to follow-up and supervise the implementation of the recommendations by the concerned authorities.

There is an indication that maternal mortality has decreased since the 1980s, and with the proposed system of improvements, the major causes can be identified and preventive measures taken to lower maternal mortality in Jordan to the level of more developed countries.

The following statistics show maternal health indicators in Jordan in 1990:

- Maternal mort. rate 60/100,000 live births
- Ave. fertility rate 5.6 child/woman in child-bearing age
- Female life expectancy at birth 68
- Percentage of pregnant women vaccinated for tetanus 46%
- Percentage of births with professional attendance 89%
- Percentage of births in hospitals 84.5%
- Contraceptive use 35%.

Dome of the Rock Committee says work on holy shrine to start as planned

MUTA (J.T.) — Work is soon to start on the restoration of the Dome of the Rock in Arab Jerusalem now that funds are available through the Dome of the Rock Committee, according to Committee Deputy Chairman Rafi Nijem.

Addressing a seminar held in Muta University, near Karak, to focus on Jordan's role in safeguarding holy shrines in the occupied Arab lands, Mr. Nijem said that because of His Majesty King Hussein, who donated \$8.25 million, and the efforts of the committee, which has raised JD 1.75 million, the work will start on schedule.

The British Construction firm Mivan signed a deal with the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs earlier this month to restore the Dome of the Rock in 540 days.

The British firm has been assigned part of the work at a cost of JD 4.84 million, according to the deal. Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Sheikh Izzedin

Tamimi, who signed the deal, said that the company is to cover the dome with gold-plated copper sheets supported by lead beams, restore the roofs, and install an early warning system against fires.

In his address at the seminar, Mr. Nijem said that restoration was required in view of the water leakage from the ceilings and the dome.

Mr. Nijem reviewed the earlier restoration work conducted on the Dome of the Rock since the Umayyad era. Mr. Nijem also outlined the role of the Hashemite family since the days of the Sharif Hussein Ibn Ali leader of the Great Arab Revolt who was buried in Arab Jerusalem.

The first restoration took place under Hussein Ben Ali who paid 25,000 gold pounds for the work, he noted.

Under His Majesty King Hussein the Dome of the Rock witnessed additional attention and the special restoration committee

formed upon his directives has been active since 1956. Mr. Nijem added.

Before the deal was signed with the British firm, Jordan reaffirmed its commitment to cover the cost of restoring the Dome of the Rock, noting that the commitment was "in line" with the Kingdom's policy to support the Palestinians and to safeguard the holy shrines.

In view of attempts by Saudi Arabia to finance the project through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Jordan made it clear that the organisation can by no means interfere in the work of the committee, and can only provide assistance to the other Arab and Islamic states to be channelled through the committee.

Mivan pledged that it will carry out the work to the day, noting that it had earlier carried out similar restoration projects in other Islamic nations.

Abu Jaber: Ministerial meeting in Damascus fruitful, serious

AMMAN (J.T.) — Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber returned to Amman from Damascus Sunday following meetings of Arab foreign ministers who discussed the peace process and future negotiation sessions.

The meeting ended with a statement that endorsed a new round of Middle East peace talks, but said the ministers saw no substantial change in the policies of the new Israeli government led by Yitzhak Rabin.

In a statement upon returning, Dr. Abu Jaber described the meetings as serious and fruitful. "We exchanged views about various issues related to the Middle East question and coordination for the coming stage was achieved," said the minister in his statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Dr. Abu Jaber said that the ministers reviewed the outcome of the Israeli parliamentary elections, which brought a new Labour government to rule Israel and the outcome of the U.S. secretary of state's tour of the region.

Referring to the foreign ministers' statement at the end of the

meeting, Dr. Abu Jaber said that the concerned Arab parties agreed on the need to maintain coordination and consultation among themselves, stressing the need for maintaining a unified stand.

The foreign ministers discussed all aspects related to the peace process and reflected their thinking in the final statement which stressed the need for the full implementation of the international legitimacy, the return of Arab land in exchange for peace and the full implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions which grant Palestinians their right to self-determination, said Dr. Abu Jaber.

"We are ready for peace and we seek an honorable and just and durable peace if Israel is ready for that," said Dr. Abu Jaber. He said that the Arabs seek peace acceptable to the future generations.

The ministers taking part in the meeting were from Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the head of the foreign relations at the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The Egyptian foreign minister also attended the meetings.

French ambassador inspects Nabatean ruins in the south

TAFILEH (J.T.) — Department of Antiquities Director General, Safwan Tell and French ambassador to Jordan Denis Bauchard Sunday inspected excavations and restoration work at a number of ancient Nabatean sites in Southern Jordan close to the town of Tafleeh.

According to Dr. Tell, the work is being done by the French Institute of Archaeology in Amman with Yarmouk University and the Department of Antiquities.

This is the fourth season of archaeological excavations being conducted at the Khirbet Al Tharib, set up near an ancient Nabatean site, the remains of an important Nabatean city dating back to more than 200 years, Dr. Tell told the Jordan Times.

He said that the excavation is being undertaken by the three parties, but the restoration of the ancient Nabatean city has been entrusted to the French archaeologists.



Sharif Zeid returns from Turkey

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker returned home Sunday at the end of a three-day visit to Turkey during which he delivered the Turkish Prime Minister Suleiman Demirel a message from His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. Upon arrival at the airport Sharif Zeid was received by Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Thawqan Hindawi, Deputy Prime Minister and Transport Minister Ali Sabehat, Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Ibrahim Izziddin and the Turkish ambassador to Jordan.

Bosnian official criticises Ghali on heavy weapons

AMMAN (AP) — A Bosnian official on Sunday criticised U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali for objecting to supervise the heavy weapons in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The official, Salem Shabets, and envoy for Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, also called on the world community "to immediately provide humanitarian and financial aid" to his war-ravaged country.

Speaking at a press conference, Shabets said Ghali "is placing a lot of obstacles in the way of the U.N. Security Council."

"The council wants the United Nations to take control of heavy weapons in Bosnia, which is to our benefit, but Mr. Ghali has strongly opposed that," said Shabets, who is also the head of an emergency council in the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo.

Under a recent ceasefire agreement negotiated by the European Community, the United Nations would take control of the heavy weapons throughout Bosnia of the Serbs, Muslims and Croats.

In a non-binding statement, the council invited EC members and other European groups about making personnel, equipment

and logistic support available.

But Ghali has told the council that U.N. forces in Yugoslavia already are stretched to the breaking point and lack personnel and funds for expanded peacekeeping.

He also complained to the council on Thursday that it was concentrating too much on Yugoslavia and should devote more time and resources to Somalia, where at least 1.5 million people are at risk of starving.

Shabets, who arrived Thursday, met with government officials, parliament members as well as representatives of Muslim relief organisations to seek humanitarian aid.

The Muslim Brotherhood, Jordan's most influential political group, has been highly sympathetic with the situation in Bosnia and has repeatedly called on feuding Muslims in the embattled country to immediately halt the bloodshed.

The movement and the Green Crescent Society, the Muslim equivalent of the International Committee of the Red Cross, have recently contributed \$35,000 worth of medical supplies to the newly independent state.

Oil, chemical workers appeal to Parliament to endorse labour law

AMMAN (J.T.) — Workers in the oil and chemical industries Sunday appealed to the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament to focus on the new labour law and urged them to endorse it during the current extraordinary session.

The appeal came in a memorandum by Jamal Tamimi, the workers union president, sent to the speakers of the two houses of Parliament. It will soon embark on discussing the draft law as presented to them by the government.

The prime ministry has finalised the draft of the labour law which caters to the contemporary social and economic situations and the various Arab and international agreements endorsed by Jordan.

Minister of Labour Abdul Karim Al Kabarti submitted the draft to the government which in turn referred it to the Lower House for debate and endorsement.

The minister said that the law covers labour-related and socio-economic developments in Jordan not existing in the old law and has provisions for new workers and their rights.

Mr. Tamimi said in his memorandum to the Parliament that the new law was bound to raise the status of Jordanian workers and improve their living condition, providing them with protection against arbitrary dismissal. He said the new law provides psychological stability for workers, enabling them to contribute more positively towards the country's development.

Upon presenting the law to the government, the minister notes that the new provisions make it imperative for industrial institutions to accept trainees, requiring those institutions to contribute to the cost of vocational training programmes which benefit workers who are later employed by these businesses.

The new law has provisions benefiting women and children, with the latter enjoying a paid maternity leave of 10 weeks before and six weeks after delivery, noted the minister.

The new law provides for regulations concerning the employment and dismissal of workers end-of-work compensation and other benefits, and the creation of unions.

'Son of Pink Panther' brings zany criminals, comedy and cash to Jordan

By Mona Ghunaim
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The kidnapping of an Arab king's daughter in Monte Carlo Harbour recently brought a zany group of criminals, inspectors and seductive women to Jordan as the illegitimate son of the renowned Inspector Clouseau took charge of a case doomed for hilarious blunders and mishaps.

Jordan was chosen as a location for filming two scenes from director Blake Edwards' 50th movie, "Son of Pink Panther," the eighth in a series of Pink Panther films. Only this time the late Peter Sellers' comic role of Inspector Clouseau has been succeeded by Clouseau's illegitimate son, Jacques, played by Italian actor Roberto Benigni.

Although almost unknown in America, Mr. Benigni is quite the comedian of Italy, bathing in the recent success of "Johnny Stecchino," an Italian film that, according to The New York Times, he wrote, directed and starred in; the film is said to have earned around \$33 million in Italy. Mr. Benigni has also been in American director Jim Jarmusch's films "Down by Law" and "Night on Earth."

Mr. Benigni is joined on the screen by Italian counterpart Claudia Cardinale who portrays Jacques's mother, Maria. In the film, Jacques is assigned to locate and recover the princess

of an imaginary Arab land who is kidnapped in France and taken back to the Arab country to be held for ransom. In this regard, the film crew selected Petra as the location for a battle scene at the fortress in which the princess is imprisoned and the Jordan University of Science and Technology for the royal palace in which a grand ceremony takes place.

The 130-person crew, who arrived July 19, and left Jordan Saturday, July 25, filmed the scenes simultaneously. However, work on the actual sets began a few weeks earlier when over 50 Jordanian labourers built a temporary fortress attached to the Petra Forum Hotel.

Jordan will not only profit from the opportunity to be in a major film, but also from hard currency which the crew poured into the country. Secretary-General of the Ministry of Tourism Nasri Atalla told the Jordan Times that almost a million Jordanian dinars would be spent on the Jordanian market. In addition, over 100 extras selected in Jordan were used in the scenes.

Ministry of Tourism officials see the filming as an opportunity to promote tourism. "We have no objection for Jordan to become a

location for filming," Mr. Atalla said, noting that certain requirements needed to be met before an agreement was made. "First, we require the script," he said, pointing out that derogatory passages or scenes to the Arab World and negative political overtones could not be accepted. "No scenes that are culturally or socially derogatory or that will embarrass the Kingdom will be shot," Mr. Atalla pointed out.

While Mr. Atalla welcomes the film's positive effect on the national economy, he does not see the need for Jordan to be overly publicised. "We're not looking for Jordan to be put in the film for credit," he said, mentioning that the Jordanian Armed Forces contributed to the film but no indication of positions would be given. Ministry of Tourism officials are simply content with the fact that "the government lent its hand in facilitating" the film crew's work.

Nevertheless, a little incentive never hurt anyone as a Jordanian member of the film's production crew implied in his reaffirmation of the military's interest in "attracting this sort of support (hard currency) to the country."

Jordan Times Tel. 667171

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Agricultural project starts in occupied lands

AMMAN (J.T.) — A week-long training courses on planning and evaluating agricultural and rural development projects in the occupied Arab territories started in Jerusalem Saturday. The course, organised by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) aims at developing skills of the Palestinian people to enable them to carry out investment studies in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Jerusalem Open University, according to a press release issued by ESCWA office here. Taking part in the course are 20 Palestinians drawn from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. To ensure the success of the course ESCWA organised a training course for trainers during the period from June 30 through July 5, to inform them about the best methods of presenting information and developing skills.

5,000 voter cards distributed

AMMAN (Petra) — A total of 5,000 voter registration cards have been distributed so far in the sixth constituency, according to Madaba district governor Musleh Tarawneh, who is also head of the elections in this constituency. Mr. Tarawneh said that issuance of cards will stop August 10. He pointed out that the governorate has taken all the necessary measures to hold parliamentary elections on July 18. He noted that 30 polling centres will be receiving eligible voters. There are 33,874 eligible voters in the constituency.

Jerash festival comes to an end

AMMAN (J.T.) — The 11th Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts ended on Saturday evening when senate member Laila Sharaf snuffed the flame after the final performance at the ancient Greco-Roman site.

Mrs. Sharaf, vice president of the higher national committee for the festival, also lowered the Jordanian and festival flags, as the armed forces brass band played national and martial music to mark the end of the various cultural events presented between July 15 and 25.


The 11th Jerash festival included shows by Jordanian and Arab folk troupes, concerts, theatrical shows and poetry recitals. Renowned Syrian actor and playwright Dureid Laham presented two plays at the festival "The Rain Maker" and "The Happy Bird." The festival included several performances by Lebanese singers Milhem Barakat and Julia Butros, which attracted thousands of spectators. Jordanian folk troupes presented national dances and songs as well as children's plays.

WHAT'S GOING ON Exhibitions

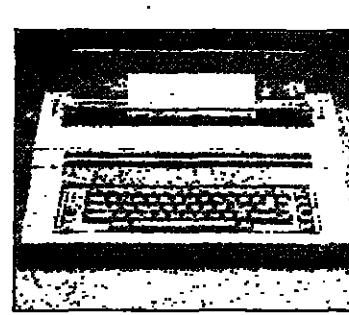
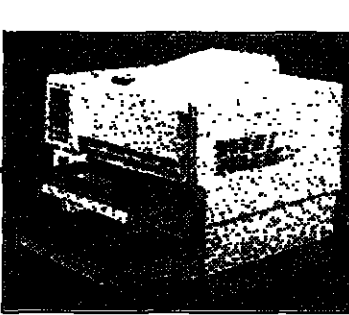
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Exploring Science" at the British Council.
- ★ Ceramic sculpture exhibition entitled "Remains of Eghos" by Iraqi artist Haidi Mishi at Bahadna Art Gallery.


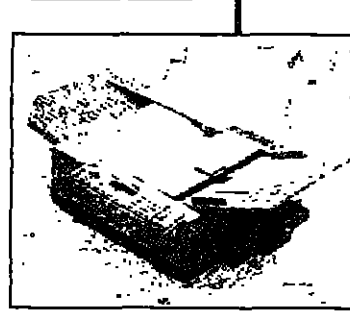
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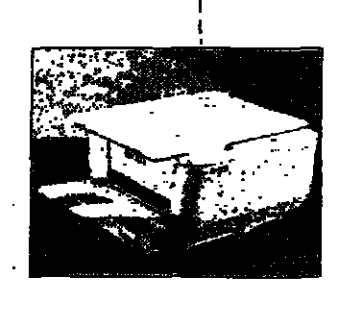
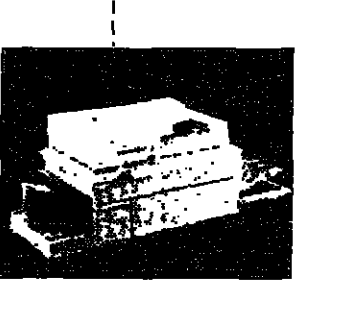
- ★ Lecture entitled "The Madaba Plains Project's Fourth Season" by directors of project: Dr. Lawrence Gaty of Atlantic Union College, Dr. Larry Hear of Canadian Union College and Dr. Oystein LaBianca and Dr. Randall Younger of Andrews University, at ACOR — 7:30 p.m.



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Chairman of the Board of Directors:

MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:

MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 67041-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 661242

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Tip of the iceberg

THE RECENT international conference on AIDS held in Amsterdam was not only a demonstration of North-South cooperation on ways and means to prevent and eradicate the HIV virus but also to depict a horrific picture about how the developing world is literally sitting on a volcano in the sense that 90 per cent of the plague is projected to originate from the poorer countries of the world. In this context it was disappointing that whereas the majority of the cases related to HIV virus will be connected with the underdeveloped nations of the world, only 10 per cent of the participants at the Amsterdam meeting came from these countries. This in itself also tells a very sad story because apparently the poor states and people are virtually hiding their heads in the sand and pretending that the disease is only a trademark of the rich and developed nations of the world. Now we know better. India for example is anticipating an avalanche of AIDS victims in the near future. Other countries in South-East Asia are also experiencing an upsurge in cases related to the disease. That is not to say that the developed and industrial nations of the world have no cause to be concerned. On the contrary the rich nations of the world have also plenty to be anxious about the plague since they too are experiencing a rise in the number of cases connected with AIDS. The difference between the sides lies, however, in the fact that unlike the wealthy and developed countries of the world, the poor states and their people are literally doing very little to even acknowledge that they too are not only recipients of the disease but also the sources of it. Against this backdrop what is disturbing about the South is the fact it is rather shy in dealing with the alarming new situation and is not adopting candid approach.

For one thing, there is hardly an effective campaign to educate the people on the disease. Even much less is the amount of attention accorded to its prevention by a variety of simple yet effective means. On our own turf in Jordan there is only sporadic and intermittent attention being paid to the problem and it is confined to occasions earmarked for international occasions and events when AIDS is given worldwide review and consideration. Not that we have a crisis in the country; far from it. But being a country with a vibrant campaign to promote tourism into and outside the country, one would have thought that a more concerted effort could be exerted to thwart any rise in the extent of the problem.

It is not enough to simply seek information from incoming visitors whether a person had undergone an operation and whether he or she had received blood transfusion because of it. It is certainly important that the government requests such basic information about blood transfusions that may have been conduits for passing the disease to a Jordanian returning home. Still much more needs to be done in view of the revelation at the Amsterdam gathering that 90 per cent of the plague will be connected with the developing countries in the course of the next few years. Our health authorities need to take the problem by the horn and deal with it effectively and boldly. Any lingering sensitivities about public moral need to be abandoned in favour of a more frank discussion on the problem. This is in essence what the Amsterdam meeting had tried to tell the poor countries of the world and Jordan could be in the forefront of the efforts to prevent the spread of the illness to the Middle East region.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A MEETING by the foreign ministers of countries in direct confrontation with Israel achieved success as is clear from its final statement issued Saturday, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily. The paper said the statement reaffirmed the Arab countries' commitment to the peace process and it also stressed that the Arab countries hold a unified strategy vis-a-vis the negotiations, calling on Israel to stop its procrastinations and comply with the international legitimacy and implement U.N. Security Council resolutions. The statement gives cause for satisfaction that the Arabs are finally united to deal with Israel at the negotiating table and it also questions whether the time has come for all the Arab states to end their differences and embark on a new chapter of real solidarity, said the paper. It said Jordan has been instrumental in gathering the Arabs together in a united front vis-a-vis Israel, but the time has come for all other Arab states to join in the efforts. The fast moving developments in the region require quick steps towards national reconciliation among the Arab regimes and a call for positive action towards enabling the Arab states confronting the Israeli enemy to regain their lost territory and end Israel's occupation of Palestinian land, the paper said. While Jordan warmly welcomes the consensus reached by the foreign ministers in Damascus, said the paper, it fervently appeals to the other Arab countries to open a new chapter of inter-Arab relations, ending inter-Arab differences and regaining solidarity which serves as a strong weapon in the face of the common dangers and threats.

SAWT AL SHAAB daily commended the foreign ministers of the Arab countries who demanded in their statement a full halt of all forms of Israeli settlement programmes and their rejection of Israel's demand for planting so-called political and security settlements. The paper said that partial halt of settlements, as the foreign ministers said, was not enough and the U.S. rewards for Israel, for doing that, does not help give impetus to the peace process. The foreign ministers are also to be commended for their firm stand against any partial solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict and their demand that Israel pull out all its forces from all territories occupied in the 1967 war so that the aspired peace can be achieved, said the paper. It said that the U.S. secretary of state, who had meetings with Israeli and Arab leaders, has stated clearly that Israeli leaders have no plans to speed up the peace process, but at the same time the U.S. secretary was expecting concessions from the Arabs, the paper said. It said that it is Israel which is occupying Arab lands, that should give the concessions and stop procrastinating.

'Democratisation is a continuous process that will continue to develop'

Following is an interview with Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Ibrahim Izideen that appeared in the June-July issue of "Jordan," which is a bi-monthly review published by the Jordan Information Bureau in Washington DC. Mr. Izideen has held several government, diplomatic and public administration posts before his appointment in Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker's second government. He was born in 1934 in Beirut, Lebanon and graduated from the American University of Beirut with a degree in political science. He has served in numerous public posts, including minister of information, ambassador to Switzerland, England, Germany, and the United States. He also was head of the Civil Service Commission in the late eighties. He describes himself as a "centrist" in the political spectrum, with a strong commitment to human rights and to the democratic process.



Ibrahim Izideen

How far has Jordan reached in its democratisation process?

I think we have progressed quite a bit. We have gone a long way since the 1989 parliamentary elections. We have an elected parliament and now we are reaching a point where pluralism is going to really take its shape in a legal and formal manner. As you very well know, political parties, although not legally established, have been operating since the elections in Jordan. We have political parties now but they do not yet operate at all levels of our political life, though they are there and they express their opinion about many issues.

It is not going to be a surprise when parties are legalised, nor will things be much different. Of course things will be much more organised because every party will publish its platform, and have a publication and offices.

After formalising the existing situation by ratifying the political parties law that was presented to parliament earlier this summer, do you see other steps to continue the democratisation process?

Democratisation is a continuous process and I do not think it will stop at any stage. It will continue to develop, and these laws are umbrellas to help pro-

vide legality and a means to help organise the change into a real democratic society. So I think it is a process where we will see many changes. I do not expect great changes because everyone who has had something to say has said it. But everything will be much more organised.

What do you think has been the impact of the absence of pluralism in the country for over 40 years? How has this affected the democratic process in terms of institutions and the general education of the people on what democracy involves?

Of course the absence of the democratic process affects the practice of democracy today. But I have to be fair and say there has not been a total absence of democratic process in Jordan. We have, all through our history, exercised many democratic steps in our political life. Jordan was never a closed society. Jordanians always had the possibility of practicing their basic freedoms. At certain stages there were difficulties in some areas. But in Jordan's history there has never been a real denial of basic human rights, which are the essentials and basis of any democratic society.

To a certain extent freedoms

have always been there but they were never institutionalised in the way they are now. For quite a long time we had parliamentary life in Jordan. Now it is different, much more free and solid. We have had a few periods of real free press and of course there have been ups and downs. At a certain stage, we did have political parties. It will take time for everything to crystallise and take shape.

Do you consider Jordan's democratisation process a radical move or is it a natural evolution?

I would say it is not a totally radical shift but it would definitely affect the political life of the country for a long period. It is not a totally radical shift because we had the seeds of our democratic life. But to have the seeds of a democratic life and to practice some aspects of democracy is totally different from having a full democratic life as we are exercising now. It is a real change in our lives.

What is the effect of Jordan's democratic process on the Middle East region?

It will have an effect because I

think when the countries in the area look at what is happening in Jordan, they see a rather positive example. They see people living together despite their political and ideological differences, arguing their problems in parliament and in the press rather than fighting in the streets. They see that the country is stable. We hope we can continue the process without great difficulties.

How does the lack of democracy in the region affect Jordan's efforts to democratises?

I would not say there has been a great effect. Of course one country affects another but I think our exercise in the last three years has been independently made. We were not at all affected by any other nondemocratic exercise. Usually you are much more influential if you offer democratic institutions rather than the denial of such institutions.

To what extent has the economic crisis in the country hampered or affected the democratisation process?

Democratisation has helped solve many of our political and economic problems. Frankly speaking, if we did not have democracy the country would be in a very difficult situation vis-a-vis its economic problems. The fact that we have credibility as a government, the fact that parliament is there to argue every problem when it arises, the fact that we have a free press to initiate debate, all have helped solve some of our economic problems.

What types of parties do you see emerging in Jordan? Do you think they will be similar to the existing embryonic parties or do you expect new trends?

I do not anticipate anything

new because in the last three years every political grouping has had the chance to organise in one way or another. The government of the day always tolerated such organisations, even before passage of the parties law. Honestly, I do not think there will be great changes in the character of the parties.

How do you see the fact that 10 per cent of parliament argued against pluralism at the start of the debate on the parties law?

It is interesting, and it reflects the diversity in our political process. They held the extreme view that political parties can be a divisive factor in society. They are entitled to their views and it is interesting to listen to their argument. Of course, the other 90 per cent of parliament is arguing in favour of pluralism.

What is the danger, if any, of having religion-based parties, narrow Jordanian nationalist parties, or pan-Arab nationalist parties? How will these forces be accommodated?

I do not see any danger in any political grouping because these groupings are already in existence. I see danger if you deny them the right to work publicly. You cannot deny people the right to organise as they wish. The best thing is to give every group the chance to operate publicly. If you try to suppress any opinion or trend, you will have problems such as we have witnessed in many parts of the world.

How do you respond to frequent Western comments that Islam and Arab culture are incompatible with democracy?

We have a major Islamic group, the Muslim Brotherhood, and they were members of the committee that drafted the

National Charter, which regulates political life in the country. They have accepted pluralism, and every party that accepted pluralism is entitled to operate in one way or another. I reject the idea that Islam does not accept democracy. I think we have to see how things operate under one new law, which would allow all shades of opinion to organise. As far as we are concerned, from our experience in Jordan, the major Islamic group has operated within democratic rules. They have accepted pluralism. They joined the government, and they joined the act in a democratic manner.

But if you look at the other countries in the region, the picture is very different. Does it concern you that Jordan is the only country that so far has dealt peacefully with its Islamist movement?

I am not really entitled to judge. Our experience has been very successful, and the Islamist movement is a very positive movement. They are operating under democratic laws and the constitution. I think the process has given every political group in the country, including the Islamist, the freedom to organise. Everyone is respecting the constitution and this is a breakthrough in our political life in the whole area. This is a new experience that I hope other countries will look at, and not the other way around.

I think there is a point of separation between the Jordanian and any other exercises, this is it. Everyone, whether right, left or centre, accepts the constitution and accepts the leadership of the country, and the parties are operating accordingly. Because of this, our system is rather successful.

Fundamentalist group inherits 60-year tradition

By Sara Al Gammal
Reuters

CAIRO — The Muslim militant group behind recent unrest in southern Egypt belongs to an often-violent fundamentalist tradition that has been campaigning for a purely Islamic state for 60 years.

The history of Al Gama'a Al Islamiya (the Islamic group) illustrates the mixture of repression, compromise and occasional encouragement with which Egyptian governments have faced the spread of fundamentalist ideas.

Today, thousands of police are hunting down Gama'a militants around the southern university town of Assiut after weeks of violence, including the massacre of 13 Christians.

Gama'a members are on trial for assassinating the speaker of parliament, Rifaat Mahgoub, in central Cairo in 1990 and sympathisers say the group carried out June's murder of an anti-fundamentalist writer, Farag Foda.

But a wide range of sources say

that in the early 1970s, the government of the late President Anwar Sadat secretly encouraged the growth of the Gama'a in Egypt's universities as part of a strategy of using fundamentalists to counter the influence of socialists and communists.

President Hosni Mubarak's government still tolerates the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's original fundamentalist group which has renounced violence, and fundamentalist ideas now run in the mainstream of Egyptian politics.

"Islamic trend" candidates dominate many professional syndicates. Journalists, lawyers, and religious figures expound fundamentalist arguments in newspapers for stricter application of Islamic law.

The first fundamentalist group ready to use violence was the Brotherhood itself, founded in 1928 to create a stricter Islamic society and fight against what it saw as the excessive influence of European secular values.

A member assassinated Prime Minister Nuqrashi Pasha in 1948

and the group plotted to kill President Gamal Abdel-Nasser in 1954.

Nasser foiled the plot and crushed the Brotherhood, executing its leaders and imprisoning thousands of its members. After discovering what he said was another plot in 1963, Nasser jailed another 1,000 members and hanged its leading intellectual, Sayyid Qutb.

In prison, the movement split. A majority decided to abandon violence and work within the existing political system but some became even more determined that armed action was the only way to overthrow the state and purify society.

Their chance came after Nasser died in 1970 and his successor Anwar Sadat released most Brotherhood prisoners. Independent academics, Muslim militants and even supporters of the present government all agree he began a policy of encouraging fundamentalism to counter the left.

In 1974, a group led by a fundamentalist Palestinian, Saleh

Sirriya, recruited students at Cairo's Military Technical Academy and plotted to assassinate Sadat. The plan failed and Sirriya was executed.

Two surviving members of the group joined forces in 1979 to form Jihad (holy struggle), which finally succeeded in shooting Sadat dead in 1981 as he reviewed a military parade.

Other radicals from the prison years set up an even more extreme group ready to use violence not only against the state but also against society itself.

The group, called by the media "Al Takfir Waljihad" (excommunication and flight), kidnapped and killed a prominent religious scholar in 1977. Its leaders were executed and it never resumed serious activity.

The Gama'a emerged during the same period of the 1970s, at first functioning as the brotherhood's student organisation and establishing a base in Assiut, 325 km south of Cairo.

Members say that by the mid-1970s, the students had become

disenchanted with the Brotherhood, accusing it of compromising its ideals by joining in "corrupt" secular politics.

As the Gama'a became more radical, members say it set up a military organisation and established contact with Jihad.

Evidence given at the trial of Sadat's assassins said the two groups agreed on an alliance, formed a joint leadership and appointed blind theologian Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, a lecturer in Assiut, as spiritual

guide. When Jihad assassinated Sadat, the Gama'a launched a simultaneous armed rebellion in Assiut. Official accounts say at least 50 people were killed, 44 of them policemen, in two days of fighting for control of Assiut's security headquarters.

The authorities smashed both Jihad and the Gama'a. Members say security agencies foiled three attempts by Jihad to reorganise during the 1980 but the Gama'a was able to rebuild from 1984.

LETTERS

Whose occupied territories?

To the Editor:

Throughout the past years Israel has introduced to the world the term "Israeli occupied territories" when referring to the Arab territories occupied by Israel in 1967. This is a misleading and inaccurate description of the territories in question. These territories are actually the Arab occupied territories, the owner being the Arabs and the occupier being Israel — a fact which is very difficult to deny.

The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA) has objected to the use of the term "occupied Arab lands" by ABC World News anchorman Peter Jennings. Their claim has been that these lands are not Arab lands but rather "disputed lands," and labelling them as "occupied Arab lands" is both misleading and biased.

Yet, it can also be argued that referring to them as the Israeli occupied territories is also misleading and biased on the same argument. Both the Arabs and the Jews have historical claims on these lands. However, it has been maintained that the Jews' biblical claims on these lands has always been rather "shaky."

Since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan and Sinai in 1967 and the acceptance of Resolution 242 by the Security Council, world pressure has prevented the annexation of these territories. Such pressure can only be the result of conviction, worldwide, that these lands do not legally belong to Israel, nor should they ever become part of the Jewish state.

Although legal annexation has not taken place, the increased settlement activities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Israel's refusal to grant Palestinians and kind of legal rights to these lands, in addition to Israel's military rule in these areas, may justifiably be translated into an illegal annexation of these territories.

Israel's campaign to settle the largest possible number of Israelis in these territories is a measure being taken with the aim of forcing out the Palestinians living there and replacing them with Israelis.

Depopulation and the destruction of Palestinian homes also furthers Israel in achieving this goal. If these illegal activities are allowed to continue, the day will come when the Palestinians are outnumbered and any kind of democracy will favour the Israeli government.

It would not be misunderstood what exactly is meant by "occupied territories." These are territories captured and illegally occupied by Israel. The legal owner is the Arab people. Thus, the term "Israeli occupied territories" cannot be accurate and should not be used when referring to these Arab lands. The correct term is most definitely "Arab occupied territories."

Ghadah Mahmoud,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Kuwait fundamentalists tread softly

By Assem Abdel Mohsen
Reuters

KUWAIT — Kuwait's Muslim fundamentalists favour a soft-so approach in their bid to turn the oil-producing Gulf emirate into a truly Islamic state.

Foreign diplomats and Kuwaitis alike say fundamentalism has been growing increasingly popular in the emirate since the explosion of Iraqi forces 16 months ago.

But Kuwait's brand of fundamentalism is a far cry from the firebrand variety across the Gulf waters in Iran or their militant co-religionists in Algeria. They say they have no wish to

overthrow the existing order, only to make it more Islamic.

"We censure many Islamic groups in the world. Some are extremists advocating the change of regimes by force and violent means. We do not accept that," said Ahmad Baqer, one of their leaders.

Mr. Baqer is a leader of the Sunni Muslim Salaf movement — its name means a return to the path of the forefathers.

"Our countries are Islamic states," he told Reuters in an interview. "Many of our laws are in line with Sharia (Islamic law). We call for the completion of applying Sharia in our countries. But we not are calling for creation

of new regimes."

Kuwaitis say the approach of local Shiite fundamentalists is similar to the Salaf and they are widely expected to cooperate in the campaign for Kuwait's first post-liberation general elections due in October.

Western diplomats say Kuwait's mainstream fundamentalists appear to have little to do with radical groups in neighbouring Iran which may have encouraged Islamic militancy before Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

A wave of violence in Kuwait in the past few weeks, mainly against targets seen as un-Islamic, has brought fears of a new ex-

tremism among Kuwaiti fundamentalists.

But Mr. Baqer and other fundamentalist leaders denounced the violence and rejected the accusations as propaganda spread by political opponents before October's polls.

The Salaf, which emerged in the early 1970s when many Arabs and Muslims turned to religion after the shattering Arab defeat by Israel in the 1967 war, is now considered a major political force in Kuwait.

"We are a local group within Kuwait that has no foreign connections... We call for a proper understanding of Islam... We do not believe in violence," Mr. Baqer said.

Recycling — a new branch of industry

By Hans Dembowski

BONN — Day and night a small cloud of smoke hangs over the waste incinerating plant in the German industrial city of Bielefeld. Many of the citizens are disturbed by this: readings show poisonous residues. The city fathers have had additional filters fitted to reduce the danger to the population. This cost Dm 200 million. 90 per cent of the toxic harmful substances from the smoke emitted by the refuse incinerator can be "washed out" in future.

The latest state-of-the-art in technology makes such protection possible — albeit at enormous expense. Consequently, en-

vironment conservationists and the federal government are in agreement: "The aim of modern waste management is to avoid creating refuse in the industrial and commercial sectors." This is to be achieved by relative statutory regulations: anyone causing a problem must also solve it.

Legislation was recently introduced in Germany which obliges industry and commerce to take back transport and packaging materials from the consumer, to reuse them or have them recycled. The automobile industry is soon to be required to take back old cars free of charge and to use their component parts as raw materials for recirculation. Volkswagen have already set a good

example: plastic bumpers and petrol tanks are being melted down and used for new products.

Even so, the garbage mountain continues to grow. Every day 31 million tonnes of refuse occur in Germany, and over 200 million tonnes of industrial and commercial waste — of which 10 million tonnes is of a hazardous nature. The number of refusal disposal sites will soon be inadequate and the federal government refuses to export waste to other countries. The situation is particularly critical in the case of toxic waste: the refuse incinerators have an annual maximum capacity of no more than 750,000 tonnes.

Refuse which cannot be

avoided is to be disposed of harmlessly. It goes without saying, of course, that it would be cheaper if no toxic products — which have to be disposed of sometime or other — were no longer manufactured.

Thoughts are being given at the Environment Ministry to imposing levies on refuse. This is based on the idea that industry will concern itself more intensively with the avoidance of waste if it means saving money. Similar steps must be taken at international level to banish the refuse problem. This is being urged by the German Federal Government to put a stop to the illegal export of waste and the smuggling of toxic substances — IN-Press.

On behalf of women, Elias scratches mountain with lens

By Ica Wabbeh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A more vocal feminist than women themselves, young film producer, Palestinian American Hanna Elias, expresses his feelings and thoughts free from a woman would do (at the shelter of his gender) and in an articulate, impassioned way. And he does not stop at making oral statements.

His last film, "The Mountain," is proof that his militancy goes beyond words, tries to touch sensitive chords by appealing to more than one of our senses.

A short while after the first Palestinian film week, held in Jerusalem in the last decade of June, Mr. Elias has arrived in Amman in the course of a tour of the region during which his film will be screened. "The Amman reception was the best in the region. Very good, intellectual questions were asked; the discussions following the screening (in the Phoenix hall) were most animated and interesting."

Aware that his film, awarded five international prizes for the best short film (34 minutes), touches a very sensitive issue in the Arab society, Mr. Elias says: "I probably did (touch a taboo). I was scared, but there are problems; we should solve problems not sweep them under the carpet. If we do not admit we have problems, we cannot correct them."

The plot of "The Mountain" is a "nice, human story that transcends cultural differences." It is a love story of a young Palestinian couple, fraught with the inevitable problems of a traditionalist society. The girl is forced by the father to marry a man she does not love. It is the second time it happens in the family, the first being when the same man objected to the marriage of his sister to the man she loved, killing her eventually for "breaching" the family's honour. This time, though, the grandmother, who went through the previous trauma, does everything to help her granddaughter elope. The two young people escape to Mount Jarmak — in Galilee, place of Mr. Elias' birth — and the grandmother dies immediately after, not without asking the mountain to protect the couple.

Under this simple plot lie many issues and symbolic actions that come from the producer's direct exposure to the way of living in a typical Palestinian/Arab village.



Hanna Elias

"Women in my region, in all Palestine, are dominated, subordinated to the will of men. The man forces his daughter into a marriage, the daughter elopes. It happens more often than we admit it, it is a phenomenon that my film pinpoints."

It is, the producer stresses, a story of women's survival in a male-dominated society, "the tools they use to survive and the progression towards a better future for themselves."

"Women are forced into a marriage and then forced to be good mothers and wives. It is impossible. How do we expect the society to operate?" asks Mr. Elias. Having witnessed three elopements when young, one ended in the death of the young woman, Mr. Elias says: "It impressed my subconscious. I took a stand, I started to explore; I thought, at a time, that I had been fed (ideas). I had doubts, then there was a healing process."

Having looked for two months for the main protagonist, which should have embodied "the qualities of a Palestinian woman: modest, sensitive, honest, shy, naive," it took Mr. Elias two weeks to shoot the film. "It cost not less than a regular Hollywood short film." The producer, who also wrote the screenplay, got help with the lights, the sound, the camera and from "free" actors.

"The whole community helped me," he says, adding that most expenses (of the total cost of \$80,000) went on film, processing, accommodation, food, transportation.

"International film producer, Mustafa Akkad, my family, personal money and loans" helped put the film together three years ago.

Finding buyers, especially in the region, is another story, but the film does not seem to lack appreciative audience.

"I received the Grand Prix at the Henry Longois film festival in France (Tours), the American Golden Eagle for the best short film, the Arab Oscar from the Arab centre in Paris (delivered by none other than the famous Egyptian actress Faten Hamameh), Spotlight, alumni director's guild, from UCLA (University of California, where Hanna received his Masters degree in film and TV production) and just three days ago I was called by my brother who told me that I was awarded a prize by the Philadelphia International Film Festival."

The "objective story" that Mr. Elias made into a film has its imprint on it. "I made it controversial. Women are abused in the Arab society: physically and mentally. After screening and discussions, I could say that men object (to the theme of the movie) more than women and men and women under 30 are more receptive and supportive while those above 30 oppose, it generally."

The film's "political implication," says Mr. Elias who otherwise dismisses politics, is that the two young people come from different parts of Palestine: she from the north, he from Gaza, and meet in the middle of the road. "It does not matter that one comes from a (refugee) camp or from a free village. They have the same concepts, the same culture, differences are understood, accepted."

Strongly believing that women liberation is the "real intifada," Mr. Elias holds dear the concept of the man and woman together, of the man "next to the woman and behind her to push her forward."

If these ideas may endear him to quite a few women, it certainly will not make him many friends among the "strong" gender. But "I will work and convince (man) that he can be a partner in the progress of a woman, in the change of the status quo. Not become enemies, but partners."

The symbolism in the short but emotionally charged film is best represented by the choice of the two main characters (grandmother and granddaughter), around whom all the other characters revolve, and the mountain as a title as well as character.

The grandmother, who passed through all the phases an Arab woman does, had 93 years to discover that the traditions of her society were not all pleasant. "As an Arab woman being the realisation that some of those traditions were restricting the woman's ability to choose the most essential trait of life-love," says Mr. Elias. Quoting the famous Egyptian feminist Nawal Sa'adawi, "An Arab woman goes to two places in her life: her husband and the cemetery," Mr. Elias tries to sum up the most important phases in the cycle of a woman's life that he presents with biting bitterness.

And so, the grandmother is chosen to break some traditions. By virtue of her long life and experience, she will dare go against the current, but not without impunity. Whether consciously plotted or not (and Mr. Elias would deny having planned it), the grandmother dies in the

end. Supreme justice? Save the father another killing, this time more impardonable to God?

A lesson is learned, however: That life is not all so blemishless for an Arab woman, that she must have suffered, and still suffers, a lot to reach the stage where everything she stood for once is defied.

As for the mountain, which gave the name to the film, it also carries some symbols.

"It is an accumulation of all our traditions that pile up and become an obstacle for the woman, who cannot pass by. And I was raised near a mountain, Jarmak, and everyday when opening the door I was facing it."

The mountain, like all the film, is for Mr. Elias a "collective and personal experience" that he gave life to. "I did the film not to please anyone but to present my own views through a lens."

A very expensive process, he admits, but "Arabs in the (United) States are not aware of the power of the audio-visual media. Had they been, we would have had a strong, powerful Arab lobby that could have addressed the American Congress. The Jews do and they are very strong," says Mr. Elias, but not as a prelude to a possible "political" future stand, because his avowed crusade is dedicated to trying to liberate women, "half of our society which is paralysed and needs helps."

The film is going to be screened again on August 2, 1992, at 6 p.m. at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. The screening is to be followed by discussions. Dr. Asad Abdelrahman will be the moderator.



Famous Egyptian actress Faten Hamameh is handing over to Hanna Elias the Arab Oscar in Paris

Abu Jaber

(Continued from page 1)

place, is the return of land for peace, in accordance with United Nations resolutions 242 and 338 as well as Resolution 425, which calls for Israel's withdrawal from South Lebanon," he said.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad Saturday received Dr. Abu Jaber and Dr. Abdul Salam Al Majali, head of the

Jordanian delegation to the Arab-Israeli peace talks, and the Arab foreign ministers taking part in the Damascus meeting.

Dr. Abu Jaber returned home early Sunday (see page 2).

Iraq crisis

(Continued from page 1)

authorisation from the Security Council for possible military action, noting that the previous authorisation for the Gulf war still stands.

In another interview, Mr. Cheney told ABC Television Iraq "has no choice but to comply."

Asked whether the crisis would end if Iraq agreed to allow the U.N. inspectors into the ministry, Mr. Bush's National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft said: "That doesn't end it. That deal was the tip of the iceberg. The whole iceberg remains."

Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, echoed Mr. Scowcroft's comments, telling ABC: "Simply because (Iraq) lets us into the agriculture ministry and does not comply with the rest of the U.N. Security Council resolutions, it does not mean something will not happen to make (it) comply with the U.N. resolutions."

Bilaterals

(Continued from page 1)

enough. The ministers reiterated the Arab stand that peace should come "through implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of returning all occupied Arab lands including Jerusalem in exchange for peace."

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal told reporters after arriving in Damascus on Sunday that his country supported the decisions of the Arab foreign ministers.

"Arab coordination is very important in these critical circumstances. This coordination must be observed on all levels," he said.

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Foreign Exchange Market Summary (July 20-July 24, 1992)

AMMAN — Despite being boosted by consolidated central bank intervention at the beginning of last week, traders were reluctant to alter their dollar stand until further solid indications were available. The dollar, nonetheless, ended the week an average of 2.8 per cent higher against major European currencies and 2.9 per cent higher against the yen.

A consolidated intervention headed by the Federal Reserve (Fed), the Bundesbank and the Bank of England, sent the dollar rallying by nearly four Pfennigs Monday. The intervention materialised after the dollar had slid to 1.4514 marks during earlier trading hours in New York.

Analysts were still adamant, however, that the medium term direction of the dollar will not be influenced by such an intervention, as long as the fundamentals keep projecting a weak U.S. economic recovery. But expectations differed over the dollar's immediate future on technical grounds, as speculation was mixed on whether the dollar would soon resume its decent towards 1.45 marks, or whether the 1.48 marks level would become the new floor. Trading hence remained directionless and cautious Tuesday, as some traders avoided taking new positions fearing renewed intervention, while others sought to cautiously push the dollar down to test the central bank's resolve to halt its decline.

Prompted by the sharp fall in Japanese stock prices and the emerging expectations of a possible Japanese discount rate cut, traders shifted their attention towards the yen-mark cross Wednesday and Thursday. The market's unease towards the dollar remained all the same. The Fed chairman, on the other hand, defended the U.S. currency for the first time by stating, in a testimony to the Senate, that the economy would not benefit from a continued decline in the dollar. His statement was considered cautious, as it gave no time scale for the expected economic recovery. The dollar was thus little changed, as it closed on Thursday at its lowest levels of the week at 1.4820 marks and 1.9160 dollars to the pound sterling.

The U.S. currency rebounded significantly on Friday, however, finishing the week at its highest levels in two weeks. The dollar's sharp rise was ignited by the release of June's U.S. Durable Goods data, which posted its highest gain in ten months. Traders thus sought to cover their short dollar positions against the mark, encouraged by the dollar's failure to break through support at 1.48 marks during the previous few days. The dollar was further boosted by safe haven demand on the escalation of tension between Iraq and the U.S.

Market participants will be watching closely the developments of the U.S.-Iraqi conflict next week. They also await the release of additional U.S. economic reports, to shed some light on the progress of the economic recovery, as the contention remains that much of the dollar's medium term outlook will depend on the direction of the U.S. economy.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	17/7/92	24/7/92	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.9510	1.8940	-2.92%
Deutsche Mark	1.4593	1.5040	-2.97%
Swiss Franc	1.5015	1.3322	-2.30%
French Franc	4.9300	5.0770	-2.90%
Japanese Yen	124.38	128.10	-2.90%

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Euro-Currency Interest Rates*

Currency	17/7/92	24/7/92	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	3.31	3.68	3.37	3.75
Sterling Pound	10.06	10.15	10.12	10.25
Deutsche Mark	9.69	9.75	9.68	9.68
Swiss Franc	8.75	8.75	8.77	8.25
French Franc	10.13	10.12	10.06	10.18
Japanese Yen	4.53	4.15	4.46	4.03

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	.671	.673
Sterling Pound	1.2697	1.2760
Deutsche Mark	.4455	.4477
Swiss Franc	.5030	.5055
French Franc	.1319	.1326
Japanese Yen*	.5231	.5257
Dutch Guilder	.3950	.3970
Swedish Krona	.1228	.1234
Italian Lira*	.0585	.0591
Belgian Franc	.02165	.02176

* Per 100

OPEC chief sees higher oil demand, rising prices

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (R) — The price of oil from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) will rise to between \$21 and \$25 during the 1990s, the group's secretary general has predicted.

The price hike will come from increased demand, largely by developing nations, OPEC Secretary-General Subroto said at a conference here.

An price below OPEC's current \$21 target, he said, would be insufficient to justify the \$80 billion in investments OPEC needs to boost production and meet increased demand that is expected by the year 2000 to rise by 7.1 million barrels a day. Recently, prices have averaged about \$19.50.

OPEC members produced 23.8 million barrels a day in June.

Dr. Subroto spoke at an energy conference sponsored by OPEC and the University of Alaska.

He said he could not confirm recent reports that the United States and Saudi Arabian governments made deals to keep prices low to help U.S. industry and boost total Saudi output.

But he doubted such a deal could be effective, even though Saudi Arabia is OPEC's top producer.

"There is no one party or two parties to set the price of oil," he said, adding that even if U.S. and Saudi officials did make a pact on oil prices, OPEC would impose no punishment.

Dr. Subroto and other OPEC officials blasted proposals for a tax on some pollutants, a plan environmentalists have suggested to reduce demand for fossil fuels and encourage new energy sources.

"We in OPEC reject this proposed measure as injudicious and unjust," he said in a luncheon address at the conference.

ASEAN endorses write-off of Third World debt

MANILA (R) — ASEAN foreign ministers have ended a two-day meeting in Manila backing calls for a write-off of third world debts to enable developing countries to recover and grow.

In a joint communique, ministers from the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) said there was a need for a coordinated approach to solve the global debt problem.

"The foreign ministers endorsed the idea of a major write-off of debts by official donors and commercial banks as well as by multilateral institutions," the statement said.

Ministers from ASEAN members Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand said they welcomed the progress achieved in approaches to donor countries so far.

But they reiterated the need for a "coordinated tripartite approach involving debtors, creditor countries and financial institutions to take steps to alleviate the debt burden of developing countries far beyond the scope of the current terms."

Many heavily indebted Third World countries have asked Western creditors for debt forgiveness so that they can channel scarce resources into more productive channels.

But the calls have been resisted by industrialised countries as well as commercial banks and other multilateral agencies.

"(Debt write-off) remains a serious alternative in solving problems caused by big debt," outgoing Philippine foreign secretary Paul Manglapus told reporters.

Manila, with a foreign debt of \$29 billion, one of the highest in ASEAN, has sounded out major lenders Japan and the United States for a write-off of part of

what it owes but the proposals have been rejected.

The ASEAN ministers also urged the international community to intensify efforts to finance developing countries' prospects for growth, the statement said.

It said the ministers expressed dismay over the failure to conclude the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations and were disappointed that the recent Group of Seven summit in Munich failed to kickstart the talks.

The talks, under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, seek to implement trade reforms but have been

stalled by disagreements, chiefly over farm subsidies, between the United States and the European Community.

"Failure of the round could only further restrict economic growth opportunities, encourage protectionist policies and seriously weaken the multilateral trading system," the communique said.

"The foreign ministers strongly urge the major players to demonstrate their political will and take positive steps to ensure without further delay a balanced, meaningful and satisfactory conclusion of the Uruguay Round," it concluded.

France calls for more economic coordination

PARIS (R) — French Prime Minister Pierre Berégovoy has called for a return to the kind of world economic policy coordination epitomised by the 1985 "Plaza accord" to end damage done by conflicting government actions.

He said the fact the United States had cut interest rates at the same time as Germany had raised the price of money was causing uncertainty and volatility on the financial markets and cooperation was the way to ease it.

"The world has suffered. There are different situations and insufficient cooperation. So we need international monetary and economic cooperation. We are returning to the spirit of the Plaza," Mr. Berégovoy told RTL radio in an interview.

At the Plaza Hotel in New York in 1985, the five richest nations agreed to coordinate a fall in the dollar in an attempt to restore balance to the international economy.

Mr. Berégovoy said he spoke to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to ask for his cooperation. He said last week's coordinated central bank intervention to support the dollar followed this conversation and contact between French, and U.S. officials.

Mr. Berégovoy told the cabinet earlier it was vital the United States, Japan and Europe abide

by the conclusions at the Munich summit of the Group of Seven richest nations, at which leaders pledged to coordinate efforts to relaunch economic growth.

His comments came after the last week's 0.75-point rise in the German discount rate, which hammered the dollar and also caused the mark to rise against the franc and other European currencies, doing nothing to help their sluggish economies.

Mr. Berégovoy said he understood German difficulties with inflation caused by the need to rebuild its new eastern states.

He said the U.S. budget deficit run up under former president Ronald Reagan was at the root of

the world's economic difficulties. France and other countries should draw the lesson that economic growth should be based on a sound currency and controlled government spending, he said.

But he said the French economy was sound, with low inflation, a surplus in trade and government spending under control. As a result, the government could still have scope to cut interest rates to boost growth in the next few months.

"There is no reason for the bourse to fall and for us not to find the means to act on interest rates in the coming months. I call on the professionals in the financial markets to stay calm," he

said. Paris share prices have fallen about seven per cent since the German rate increase.

He said his government would do everything possible to prevent France's jobless figure — currently a record 2.9 million — rising above three million.

Mr. Berégovoy said the need for international monetary coordination was an additional reason for the French to support ratification of the Maastricht treaty on European economic and monetary union in the referendum scheduled for Sept. 20.

Calling for a "yes" vote in the referendum, he said: "If France says no... Europe will come apart."

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"There is no reason for the bourse to fall and for us not to find the means to act on interest rates in the coming months. I call on the professionals in the financial markets to stay calm," he

said. Paris share prices have fallen about seven per cent since the German rate increase.

He said his government would do everything possible to prevent France's jobless figure — currently a record 2.9 million — rising above three million.

Mr. Berégovoy said the need for international monetary coordination was an additional reason for the French to support ratification of the Maastricht treaty on European economic and monetary union in the referendum scheduled for Sept. 20.

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Financial crises idle Russian machinery plants

MOSCOW (R) — Two of Russia's biggest factories producing farm machinery have ground to a halt because of acute financial crises, television reports have said.

Russian Television news said the giant Rostselmash plant in the southern city of Rostov had been idle for two weeks because suppliers in neighbouring Ukraine have halted deliveries of vital components.

It said Rostselmash, the biggest producer of combine harvesters in the former Soviet Union, owed the suppliers four billion roubles (\$29.6 million) but was itself owed nine billion roubles (\$66.7 million) by private and state farms.

ITAR-TASS news agency said 44,000 workers at the plant had been laid off because of the crisis.

The factory's plight dramatically illustrated both the collapse of economic links between former Soviet republics and the huge chains of debt accumulated by many enterprises.

President Boris Yeltsin, in a decree effective from July 1, has ordered debtor companies to pay up what they owe — a step that threatens many firms with closure.

Commonwealth Television reported that tractor assembly lines at a second major plant, the Kirov factory in St. Petersburg, had been at a standstill, apparently because it was unable to find buyers for its output.

It said desperate managers had laid off workers but offered them commission payments for any tractors they could sell on their own initiative.

A commentator said the crisis showed the need to "restore economic links" and offer cheap government credits to farmers, most of whom were unable to afford the current price of one million roubles (7,418) per tractor.

ITAR-TASS reported separately that 22 textiles factories in Moscow had halted production from July 1 because of lack of raw materials and debts to suppliers, and more than 40,000 employees had been sent on two months' leave.

The Russian government is discussing new ways to provide funds to the hard-pressed agricultural sector, including offering cheap loans to farmers and suppliers, ITAR-TASS news agency said last month.

TASS said the government commission on the 1992 harvest campaign planned to offer farmers cheap loans totalling 105 billion roubles (\$1.05 billion at the central bank rate).

Additional credits of 250 billion roubles (\$2.5 billion) would go to pay for grain and agricultural produce, while buyers of such products would receive loans of 60 billion roubles (\$600 million).

The new loans are part of a 500 billion rouble (\$5 billion) package outlined by government officials last month.

These funds would be used to support the agricultural sector and to help bail out troubled firms, officials said at the time.

Igor Gavrilov, economic advisor to Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskoi, told Reuters the credits would be made available within 10 or 15 days of the decision being signed.

Mr. Rutskoi is responsible for reforming Russia's ailing agricultural sector.



Pierre Berégovoy

Sony claims world's first blue laser

TOKYO (R) — Electronics giant Sony Corp. has said it had produced the world's first semiconductor laser to emit blue light, a development that could triple the information capacity of a compact disc.

"A blue semiconductor laser has a shorter wavelength and is finer than a red laser beam, so it can read more densely-packed information," a Sony spokesman told Reuters.

"We're still in the experimental stage. But when this is commercialised, it will be possible to put a wider variety of data, sound and video information into a disc because of the increased capacity," he said in a telephone interview.

Optical disc equipment currently uses red laser beams with wavelength of about 780 nanometres (one-billionth of a metre) to read information. Sony cut the wavelength to about 470 nanometres, producing a blue beam.

The Sony spokesman said, though, that the technology could operate only at very low temperatures, a major drawback.

During experiments, it was possible to produce the blue light only when the temperature was lowered with liquid nitrogen to about minus 200 degrees Celsius (minus 328 Fahrenheit).

The company did not expect to be able to produce blue lasers at room temperature for several more years, the spokesman said.

Industry analysts say that although Sony has succeeded in coming up with technology that manufacturers world-wide have been searching for, it could be

some time before it was put to practical use.

"(In Sony's method) the temperature has to be quite low, so commercial application in the near term is unlikely," Barclays de Zoete Wedd Securities analyst Boris Petersik said.

Analysts said it was essential to be able to emit the laser beam at room temperature — not only would practical use put the equipment in an ordinary room but the disc player was likely to generate a lot of heat.

If the technology was to be put to commercial use, the blue beam must be produced at about 70 degrees Celsius (158 Fahrenheit), said Naoki Sato, analyst with Schroders Securities.

"Otherwise this laser technology is going to be very expensive. You'd have to keep the disc steeped in liquid nitrogen to cool it," Mr. Sato said.

He added that a strong, bright beam was also important for commercialisation because weak lasers could not read information on a disc.

Sony produced its blue laser by developing a new material made from semiconductor substances used in current laser technology, the company spokesman said.

Schroders' Sato said the new technology might not bring direct profits rolling into Sony's coffers when it was commercialised because the market for semiconductor lasers was not very large.

"But it will be a valuable weapon for Sony, because the company will be able to use the lasers in a wide variety of products," he said.

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Distractions block Bush bid to counter Clinton

BROOKVILLE, Ohio (AP) — President George Bush has been stumbling on the campaign trail, dismaying some aides who are watching their candidate slip further in the polls.

Mr. Bush campaigned Friday with a simple goal: Follow Democratic nominee Bill Clinton into Ohio and Missouri and counter his newfound popularity with a blast at Congress and focus on family values.

But by the time he made it to the microphone the battle was lost. Again.

First, Mr. Bush was heckled at a morning event of families of U.S. soldiers missing in South East Asia, to the point of shouting "please shut up and sit down" at a man in the audience.

Then, as Mr. Bush tried to regroup, his spokesman announced the Republican president was scuttling his vacation plans because of the latest confrontation with Iraq, diverting attention from Mr. Bush's campaigning.

"We can't get our message out," grumbled a senior campaign aide. "Lately, nothing is going right around here."

Other aides conceded it has been tough going lately as the Bush camp tries to shake its lethargy and chip away at Clinton's lead in the polls, which swung to a new high.

In the survey by Time magazine and Cable News Network, Mr. Clinton leads Mr. Bush by a margin of 53 per cent to 26 per cent among the 855 registered voters surveyed on July 22-23. Results of the poll were released Saturday.

The poll also showed that Mr. Bush's approval rating dropped to 30 per cent, matching an historic low that the survey first recorded in its June sampling.

Mr. Bush advisers are counting on a turnaround in the three weeks leading up to the Republican convention, with a TV campaign designed to reinforce Mr. Bush's record and accomplishments. The theme will mirror the message Mr. Bush brought to Brookville Friday only to have it overshadowed.

"Since I have become president, we have changed the world, and now we want to use that leadership to make things better in the United States of America."

The incumbent is wrestling to be perceived as the candidate of change but faces a fresh-faced Democratic ticket of Mr. Clinton and Al Gore.

As Mr. Bush tries to convince voters that after eight years as vice president and four as president he best represents change, he is turning more and more to blaming Congress, dominated by Democrats, as the true obstacle.

"If you want to help me move this economy forward, change the control of the United States Congress," he said in Brookville. "What's wrong with limiting the terms of some of these old geezers that have been there forever?"

Campaigning as though it were October, Mr. Clinton pushed a breakfast pace over the weekend as he opened his presidential run on the west coast with an appeal to voters hungry for change.

The Democratic presidential contender held himself out as the candidate of change at a huge rally in Spokane, Washington, Saturday.

In the fall White House race, Mr. Clinton said, "the other side will ask you to let your fears override your hopes."

"I want you to go home tonight and say, 'I have the courage to change,'" Mr. Clinton said, asking for the help of Republicans and former Ross Perot supporters, too.

He jabbed at the Bush administration for fitting some psychologists' definition on "insanity."

"Doing the same old thing over and over again and expecting a different result... That is the claim of the Bush-Quayle ticket for reelection," Mr. Clinton said.

He pounded on the need for change again at an evening rally in downtown Seattle where a crowd of 15,000 spilled onto neighboring streets.

Mr. Clinton with a 20-hour day in Spokane and Seattle to launch his first trip to the west of the general election, said the packed schedule merely indicates that he wants "an aggressive campaign."

"We have a lot of American people to reach. There's 100 days left in this election. That's an eternity," Mr. Clinton said, asked way he was keeping such a frenetic schedule even though polls showed him coming out of the Democratic national convention with a huge lead over President Bush.

Refugees arrive in Germany

Rival Bosnian factions prepare for peace talks

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (Agencies) — Bosnia's rival factions began leaving for London Sunday for a new round of peace talks after a night of fighting in Sarajevo and other regions of the battle-weary republic.

Meanwhile, trainloads of refugees fleeing the carnage in Bosnia-Herzegovina arrived in Germany Sunday.

No casualty figures were available early Sunday after rebel Serbs and Muslims and Croats exchanged artillery and small arms fire in several sectors of the Bosnian capital, as well as the republic's east and north.

Hardest hit in Sarajevo appeared to be Dobrinja. Overnight, said Bosnia's Muslim-controlled BH news agency, Serbs pounded the suburb near the airport in "one of their worst artillery attacks" ever.

Mik Magnusson, the U.N. spokesman in Sarajevo, said that at one point overnight, one shell was landing every 10 minutes in the city's northern section of Kosovo.

In Pale, about 20 kilometres east of Sarajevo, Bosnian Serb leaders opposed to the republic's independence formalised the borders of their self-proclaimed Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

They claimed about 65 per cent of Bosnia's territory, an area stretching from the Drina River boundary with Serbia, the Sava and Una River borders with Croatia and a still undefined

stretch of the Adriatic coast, reported the Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency.

Tanjug also reported that a Serbian delegation left for London for talks chaired by European Community special envoy Lord Carrington. The talks, expected to include Serbian, Muslim and Croat delegations, are to start Monday.

Previous rounds have achieved little progress in ending the war that began after Bosnia's Muslims and Croats voted on Feb. 29 for independence from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

At least 7,500 people — more than 40,000, according to some estimates — have died since. Nationalist Serbs oppose independence and have captured about two-thirds of Bosnia in the fighting. Serbs make up a third of the population.

The violence has uprooted nearly one-third of Bosnia's 4.3 million people. They, and displaced from earlier fighting in Croatia, make up the largest wave of European refugees since World War II.

In Germany, about 800 Bosnian refugees — the first of 5,000 — arrived in Unna-Massen near Dortmund shortly before noon (1000 GMT) Sunday on the first Red Cross-chartered train to reach its destination.

In all, about 2,500 Bosnian women, children and elderly were aboard three trains which crossed into Germany from Austria late Saturday and early Sunday.

They are to be housed throughout the country.

Dr. Klaus Kahlke, one of about 40 doctors, nurses and midwives aboard each of the six refugee trains Germany dispatched, said the refugees were in relatively good condition but exhausted.

The last three trains with the remainder of the refugees are expected to begin arriving in Germany Monday.

Before the latest influx, German officials had said about 200,000 people who had fled fighting in former Yugoslavia had sought refuge in Germany.

In Sarajevo Saturday, a mine-scarred U.N. relief convoy limped back to the Bosnian capital after failing to relieve the besieged southeastern town of Gorazde. About 70,000 people there are increasingly short of food and other basics after a more than 80-day blockade by Serbs.

The convoy turned around after it was rocked by two land mines and encountered small-arms fire.

Serb forces said Saturday that if relief planes landing at Sarajevo flew over territory they control, they would react "with all means" at their disposal.

U.N. officials in Sarajevo said a French contingent of 282 soldiers and 44 medical personnel was en route Sunday to Sarajevo from Belgrade, the Serbian and Yugoslav capital. French, Ukrainian and Egyptian troops in the



Muslim refugees search for their families in Croatia after being swept apart by the tides of war in Bosnia

next few days are to relieve Canadians as U.N. peacekeepers to keep the airport open for relief flights.

Lord Carrington has said he will negotiate no more ceasefire in Bosnia until the warlords there reach stalemate or exhaustion.

In an interview in Friday's Daily Telegraph, Lord Carrington said he would waste no more words with leaders of Bosnia's three warring factions who promised one thing and did the opposite.

Lord Carrington was speaking after the collapse of the latest ceasefire arranged in London last Friday between leaders of Bosnia's Serb, Croat and Muslim factions.

"I do not think there is much object in brokering another ceasefire unless there is a radical change in circumstances," said

the former British Foreign Secretary and NATO secretary-general.

"You would be talking to the same people who ignored what was agreed last time," Lord Carrington added.

Lord Carrington has clashed with United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali over arrangements for the latest Bosnian peace initiative and his efforts Tuesday to revive the ceasefire in Belgrade came to nothing.

Dr. Ghali complained he was not consulted before being asked to arrange for U.N. troops to monitor the combatants in accordance with the truce.

However Lord Carrington said he was not about to abandon the peacemaking role he has carried out for nearly a year without success.

Instead, the Telegraph said, he was changing tack to put the onus on Bosnian leaders to show good faith. He has told them that it is they who must decide if they wish to attend the next round of peace talks due to start in London Monday.

Lord Carrington's office said a letter had been sent Thursday to Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, a Muslim, Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and Croat Mate Boban.

"If they want to come, fine. If not we know where we stand," Lord Carrington said.

The Telegraph said Lord Carrington was also directing his energies to other parts of the former Yugoslavia where fighting was threatening to break out in at least six pockets of ethnic discord.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Walsh may try to indict Reagan

WASHINGTON (AP) — Independent counsel Lawrence E. Walsh is considering indicting former President Ronald Reagan and several close advisers in connection with the Iran-contra scandal, the Washington Post reported Sunday. Citing unidentified sources, the newspaper said that if Walsh decided to bring a case it would involve an alleged criminal conspiracy by Mr. Reagan and top aides in November 1986 to hide from federal and congressional investigators the U.S. role in a year-earlier arms-for-hostages shipment by Israel to Iran. The shipment involved U.S.-made Hawk antiaircraft missiles. The newspaper said that since obtaining an indictment on June 16 against former Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger, Mr. Walsh has been using a new grand jury to gather information from colleagues and former aides to three other top Reagan administration officials — former Attorney General Edwin Meese III, former Secretary of State George Shultz and former White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan.

Newspapers again attack U.K. minister

LONDON (R) — A scandal linking a British cabinet minister with an actress which has become the focus of a battle for press freedom refused to go away Sunday after the woman told a newspaper she had a relationship with him. National Heritage Secretary David Mellor, popularly known as the minister for fun, has been the target of controversy since a newspaper carried reports of an alleged affair last Sunday. As calls came for his resignation from a post that includes formulating government policy on the press, several newspapers published polls showing support for the minister. A Gallup poll of 1,028 people for the Sunday Telegraph found that 62 per cent thought he should not resign. Mr. Mellor's reported paramour, 31-year-old actress Antonia De Sanctis, told the Mail On Sunday: "We had a genuine relationship based on deep affection. I also believe that it was a private affair between an attractive man and a woman," she added. "Two weeks ago I was happy. Now I am living through utter hell... I don't feel guilty." Mr. Mellor, 43, is married with two children.

Mayor to run for Romania presidency

BUCHAREST (AP) — The mayor of Cluj, known for his antipathy towards Romania's sizable Hungarian minority, will run for the country's presidency in fall elections, state radio said. The candidacy of Gheorghe Funar, 41, was announced at a time of rising tensions between Transylvania's ethnic Hungarian minority and Romanians in the country's northwestern region. He was nominated for the Sept. 27 elections Friday by the ultra-right Romanian National Unity Party, which is emerging as a national power. Mr. Funar, a former economist, won nomination in secret balloting at his party's national convention in the ethnically tense city of Tirgu Mures in Transylvania, said the radio report.

Russian bomber crashes, killing crew

MOSCOW (R) — A Russian bomber crashed in southern Siberia, killing its crew, ITAR-TASS News Agency said. It did not say how many were aboard the Sukhoi-24 bomber. The pilots failed to eject as they struggled to correct an error they made over the Chita region, it said, without elaborating. TASS did not say when the accident took place.

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Exit polls show Miyazawa party sweeping to victory

TOKYO (AP) — Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) — was sweeping to victory Sunday in a nationwide parliamentary election notable for a record low turnout, according to exit polls.

Despite a faltering economy and a controversial new law to send troops abroad for the first time since World War II, voters stayed away en masse from the election for 127 of 252 seats in parliament's upper house.

Only 44 per cent of Japan's 93.7 million eligible voters had cast a ballot by 5:30 p.m. (0830 GMT), a half hour before polling ended, the government reported. The public Japan Broadcasting Corp. predicted total turnout would be 48 per cent, down from the previous low of 57 per cent set in 1983.

Television announcers and political pundits credited the dismal turnout to everything from heat and humidity to the live coverage of the Olympic Games. But perhaps most importantly, no party was able to excite an electorate that has become increasingly disaffected with Japan's scandal-plagued political system.

In the end, it was the party that has governed Japan since the mid 1950s that got the most support from those Japanese who did bother to vote.

Minutes after the polls closed, Nippon Television Network said its next polling indicated the Liberal Democrats would win 68 seats. Fuji Television network forecast 71 seats for the party.

The Socialists, Japan's largest opposition party, would get roughly one-third that amount,

the stations forecast, with all other opposition parties well behind.

"The Liberal Democrats winning more than half the seats up for election will stabilise the Miyazawa administration and put politics into a state of lull," said political commentator Shigezo Hayasaka.

Political analysts have said the shaky economy was good for the conservative, pro-American Liberal Democratic Party, claiming that voters didn't want untested opposition parties to lead the nation during tough times.

They also have said a Liberal Democratic victory would boost the party's policy of gradually expanding Japan's international role and would help stabilise Mr. Miyazawa's position.

Such a victory would reverse a humiliating Liberal Democratic defeat three years ago, when they lost their majority in the upper house for the first time because of voter anger over a new sales tax and bribery and sex scandals involving top party officials.

Although it is impossible for the Liberal Democrats to recapture a majority — they lost too many seats in 1989 when the other half of the upper house was up for election — the exit polls indicated they'll be able to pass legislation with the help of independents and centrist opposition parties.

Legislation in Japan must pass both the upper and lower houses of parliament, but the 512-seat lower house has the final say on the budget and selecting the prime minister.

Escobar may have escaped prison dressed as woman

BOGOTA (R) — Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar may have escaped from jail disguised as a woman after bribing soldiers with food and a promise of money, according to an official report.

The Justice Ministry dismissed the director-general of prisons, Lieutenant Colonel Hernando Navas — the latest senior official to lose his job over the Escobar scandal.

Mr. Escobar, boss of the powerful Medellin cocaine cartel, and nine lieutenants escaped from prison near the northwestern city of Medellin Wednesday after opposing a government attempt to transfer them to another jail.

The escape of one of the world's most wanted drug traffickers, who surrendered 13 months ago in exchange for an official offer of leniency, has deeply embarrassed the Colombian government.

The television news programme QAP said Saturday night it had obtained the official report which the Fourth Brigade of the army, responsible for guarding the outside of Mr. Escobar's prison, had sent to the government after the escape.

The report said civilian guards inside the prison conspired with the prisoners. The prisoners sometimes wore guards' uniforms and joined them at the lookout posts, it said.

But the inmates still had to get through the ring of soldiers outside the jail.

Last Tuesday the drug-traffickers gained the confidence of soldiers at two lookout posts by giving them a pan full of meat,

rice, potato salad and spaghetti, the report said.

Late that night the prisoners called over the soldier in charge of the two posts, named as Sergeant Filiberto Joya.

Sgt. Joya reportedly told the soldiers under his command that seven workmen would be leaving the prison, adding: "Tomorrow, we will receive a good sum of money."

Early Wednesday a group of seven to 10 people, dressed in various kinds of clothes, walked out of the prison and between the army posts, the report said. They were the drug-traffickers.

A soldier who saw the scene said one of the group, wearing jeans and a wig, resembled a woman. The soldier suspected it was probably Pablo Escobar in disguise, the report said.

The report did not say how the traffickers got out of jail but news reports said they apparently walked out of the gate. The army said there was no evidence of a tunnel as originally suspected.

The traffickers were heavily armed when they left jail, the report said.

Colombian army commander General Manuel Murillo said earlier Saturday that soldiers and guards were suspected of helping Mr. Escobar to escape. Judges are investigating nine soldiers and 26 guards, officials said.

The Justice Ministry announced Saturday night it was dismissing Col. Navas, the director-general of prisons. He was one of two officials kidnapped by the drug-traffickers Tuesday night after entering the prison unescorted to tell them they were to be transferred.

COLUMN

Gays call for marches to press for marriage right

BONN (R) — Homosexual groups have called for lesbian and gay couples to join mass marches on registry offices across Germany next month to press for the right to marry. A group called the Gay Lawyers (DSJ) and the German Union of Gays (SVD) said in a joint statement homosexual and lesbian couples across Germany would register at the same hour on Aug. 11 for wedding licences. The groups said the "wedding march" would be followed by a wave of legal proceedings aimed at forcing German legislators to legalise gay marriages. The two groups noted that German law did not ban homosexual relations and argued that marriage between same-sex partners should also be permitted. Television celebrity Hella von Simen and her partner Cornelia Scheel, who is the daughter of former German President Walter Scheel, have already appealed to a court to be legally married. A decision is expected in August at the earliest.

Computer challenges world checkers champion

LONDON (R) — A computer which is already the world's number two draughts (checkers) player will challenge the human world champion in London next month. The Canadian "chinkook" draughts software will meet screen to head with Marion Tinsley of the United States, champion since 1954, the contest promoters said. "The championship raises some fascinating issues about the possibilities of replicating the functions of the human brain with computers," said Tony Buzan, chairman of the Brain Foundation, one of the organisers. The software's handlers aim to topple Tinsley, who has lost only eight times in the past 38 years at the World Draughts Championships at a London hotel starting on Aug. 17.

China hospital performs world's first sex swap

PEKING (R) — Chinese surgeons have performed what is believed to be the world's first direct sex swap, exchanging internal sexual organs between a man and a woman, a doctor on the operating team said. Xia Zhao Ji told reporters a 22-year-old woman received the testicles of a 30-year-old man who received her ovaries during operations which took place last week. Doctors constructed a false penis for the woman from her stomach lining, Xia said. They removed the man's penis and replaced it with a vagina made of leather. "I believe this could be the first (such operation) in the world," Dr. Xia said. His Peking Number Three Hospital pioneered China's first sex change operations in 1984. Both patients are recovering well, but the ex-woman must take immunosuppressive drugs to overcome rejection of the new organs, the surgeon said. Further operations will be necessary for the ex-woman to have a male erection but Dr. Xia said he was confident the ex-man would be able to have a complete sex life.

Malaysian parliament to rule on sex tape

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — The fate of a videotape purportedly showing a former deputy speaker of Malaysia's parliament having sex with several women was still up in the air. "I will give another ruling soon on what is to be done with the tape," speaker Mohamad Zahir Ismail told parliament after an opposition motion that the house, and not the government lawyer, should decide its fate was defeated. Opposition Democratic Action Party (DAP) member Karpal Singh stunned parliament earlier this week by presenting it with a copy of a videotape which he claimed showed former Deputy Speaker D.P. Vijendran having sex with several women. Parliament accepted the videotape from Mr. Singh, who first raised the issue in parliament two years ago, but rejected his proposal that members view the tape. "I accept the tape on behalf of parliament," said Deputy Speaker Ong Tee Keat. "I know other MPs want to know what is in it but this is not the time." Mr. Singh said he had copies of 10 other videotapes as well as thousands of photographs showing Mr. Vijendran in sex acts with various women.

ASEAN and major partners split over Burma

MANILA (R) — South East Asian nations and their major trading partners ended talks Sunday deeply divided over how to temper human rights abuses in Burma.

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) stuck to its guns that a policy of "constructive engagement" would encourage the military junta in Burma to introduce reforms.

Its industrialised partners, led by the United States, strenuously urged a tougher line.

"Collectively, our message to the Burmese military authorities must be loud and clear: release all political prisoners immediately and begin a dialogue aimed at rapidly transferring power to a democratically-elected government," U.S. Secretary of State James Baker told ASEAN foreign ministers Sunday.

Mr. Baker conceded there had been "some positive but very limited changes" in Burma in the last year, including the release of a handful of political prisoners.

But this minimal progress cannot obscure the reality that Burma's human rights situation remains deplorable," he added, noting that Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi was

beginning her fourth year of house arrest on political charges. "We are perhaps a bit more of a hard cop on this issue because we do not see much progress on the human rights front and we see zero progress towards democracy," Mr. Baker told a new conference later.

"We are the soft line," replied Thai Foreign Minister Arsa Sarasin. "I do see positive developments there... It's going in the right direction."

Mr. Arsa defended ASEAN's policy of quiet diplomacy because "we do believe we should engage them in order to encourage them to move in this positive direction."

ASEAN cited Rangoon's decision to free political prisoners and allow visits to opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi as proof that its approach is working.

The foreign ministers of ASEAN — which links Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and the Philippines — said their policy represented the "Asian way" of doing things.

Canada and Australia had lobbied ASEAN to impose an arms embargo against Burma take other measures to isolate its government.

The dispute over Burma was one of the main issues in the talks between ASEAN members and their seven trading partners — the United States, the European Community, Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea.

But both groups were united in blaming the Khmer Rouge for stalling implementation of the Paris peace agreement that was supposed to end 13 years of war in Cambodia.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus said ASEAN and its partners had agreed that "none of the Cambodian parties should be permitted to derail the peace process and that the Paris accords were not subject to renegotiation or reinterpretation."

The Khmer Rouge, blamed for the deaths of a million Cambodians when it ruled the country in the 1970s, has refused to surrender its arms as it had promised to do under the United Nations-sponsored peace plan.

The next ASEAN foreign ministerial conference will be held in July 1993 in Singapore.

Mr. Baker promised South East Asian allies Sunday that the United States would remain a Pacific power.

In his speech to the foreign ministers Mr. Baker sought to calm fears that the end of the cold war would mean a diminished American role in the area.

He acknowledged that the U.S. withdrawal from Subic Bay Naval Base in the Philippines by year-end means there will no longer be permanent American bases in South East Asia.

But he insisted: "This development has not altered our interest in, nor our commitment to, Asian security. The form of our presence may have changed but the substance of our commitment is firm."

"The United States is a Pacific power and will remain one," he said, stressing "our forces are forward-deployed in Japan, South Korea and Guam." Mr. Baker said there were new agreements granting the United States limited access to facilities in other countries, like Singapore and Malaysia.

"America's resolve to honour its treaty commitments, to promote economic growth and to support the peaceful resolution of disputes remains the bedrock of our policy towards Asia," he added.